

Documents – Schedule 16 - Ministerials

Trim no	Date of brief	Document name	Status	Reason for Exemption
M-13/1626	25/09/2013	Tentative Meeting 25/9/2013	Not released	Outside of scope
M-13/2006	28/10/2013	Meeting with Emma Davidson – WEL	Full release	
M-13/2019	4/11/2013	Complaint email to Mr Corbell- WIRC closure	Partial release	FOI Act, s41
M-13/2022	23/10/2013	Wirc Stats breakdown	Full release	
M-13/2058	8/11/2013	Mary Porter Correspondence - WIRC	Partial release	FOI Act, s41
M-13/2094	18/11/2013	Kate Lundy Correspondence - WIRC	Full release	
M-13/2097	19/11/2013	WiRC -Communication	Partial release	FOI Act, s41
M-13/2099	4/11/2013	Correspondence - WIRC	Partial release	FOI Act, s41
M-13/2116	18/11/2013	WIRC - Statistics	Full release	
M-13/2216	22/11/2013	Meeting with representatives from WEL	Full release	
M-13/2314	5/12/2013	Position paper on WIRC	Full release	
M-13/2375		WIRC – ACTCOSS letter to Minister Burch	Full release	
DBC-13/1035	20/11/2013	WIRC and Child and Family Centres	Partial release	Some information is outside of scope
DBC-13/1074	09/12/2013	Letter to ACTCOSS	Release in full	



M-13/2006

Date 28 October 2014

To Minister for Women
▪ Director-General
▪ Deputy Director-General

From Director, Community Participation Group

Subject Meeting with Emma Davidson – Women's Electoral Lobby

Critical Date

HIGH PRIORITY

You have agreed to meet with Ms Emma Davidson on Wednesday 30 October 2013.

Sensitivities

Ms Davidson intends to raise with you her concerns about the closure of the Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC). You should emphasise that WIRC is not being closed but it is relocated and where possible outreached into other appropriate community facilities.

Purpose

To provide you with background information to assist with your meeting with Ms Davidson.

Background/Issues

Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL)

WEL is a feminist political organisation founded in 1972. It is a non party political and non sectarian women's lobby. In that same year, members of Canberra Women's Liberation organised the first meeting of WEL in the ACT.

Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC)

WIRC was established in 1978 by the Federal Liberal Government's Office of Women's Affairs as a shopfront style information service to provide information on women's agenda issues. WIRC focus shifted from national to local issues, coinciding with preparations for self-government.

Since September 2013, the Community Services Directorate has commenced implementing a re-design of WIRC. This included:

- public announcement that the WIRC shopfront service delivery model will change as of end 2013 with functions and services remaining;
- consultation with staff and provision of supports for changes to their roles; and
- consultation with key stakeholders to identify actions for transitioning to a new service delivery model; and
- long term gender responsive service design and delivery.

Information to assist you with the meeting with Ms Davidson is at Attachment A.

Consultation

The Office for Women consulted with Ms Davidson.

Recommendation

That you:

- note the information in this brief including Attachment A


Nic Manikis
Director
Community Participation Group

AGREED/ NOT AGREED/ PLEASE DISCUSS

Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
October 2013

ATTACHMENT A

- There is an emerging need to transform the Womens Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) model that has been in place since the establishment of the Centre 35 years ago, ensuring that women have support they need when and where they need it.
- The services and functions delivered by WIRC will continue, how they will be delivered in the future is subject to consultation with staff and the sector.
- This change is about reducing duplication in services while providing improved outreach, so that women have better access to programs and services. This will be achieved in part by moving from a model where WIRC and its programs were based in one location to one where these services are based in the community.
- The suite of offerings to support women and girls remains strong and their effectiveness will be enhanced through the increased outreach under the new model. This is being achieved while remaining true to the ACT Government's aim of fiscal responsibility.
- These changes will also see savings in administrative costs and an opportunity to reinvest a portion of these savings into the community sector.
- On Friday 18 and 25 October 2013, the Community Services Directorate consulted with representatives from the ACT Women's Sector including the Women's Centre for Health Matters, Domestic Violence Crisis Service; Rape Crisis Centre; Inanna; Women's Legal Centre; Multicultural Women's Advocacy and ACT Council of Social Services to engage the community in developing a new model for service delivery.
- On Tuesday 22 October 2013, you sought the advice from the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women's views.
- In 2012-13, Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) staff responded to 12,470 contacts are breakdown of the contacts are:
 - Phone: 5,787;
 - Face to face appointment: 399;
 - Face to face drop in visit: 1,697;
 - Email: 3,068;
 - Fax: 80;
 - Post: 330;
 - Library: 78;
 - Internet: 302.
- Of the 12,470 contacts:
 - 95 (0.76%) identified as men;
 - 867 (6.95%) from a culturally and linguistically diverse background;
 - 96 (0.76%) from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background;
 - 274 (2.19%) identified as being over the age of 55 years;
 - 121 (0.97%) identified as having a disability;
 - 168 (1.34%) identified as being under the age of 25 years.

- In 2012-13, 14, 879 client issues/ information were raised. The top ten issues raised were:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| ▪ 1,435 (9.64 %)General information; | ▪ 751 (5.05%) Legal; |
| ▪ 1,381 (9.28 %)WIRC Support Groups and Information Session; | ▪ 695 (4.67 %) Publications; |
| ▪ 1,009 (6.78 %)WIRC Courses; | ▪ 685 (4.6 %) Mental Health; |
| ▪ 923 (6.2 %) Domestic Violence; | ▪ 662 (4.45%) Counselling; and |
| ▪ 756 (5.08 %) Financial Matters; | ▪ 638 (4.29%) Education and Training. |

Background Information

The Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) was established in 1978 by the Federal Liberal Government's Office of Women's Affairs as a shopfront style information service to provide information on women's agenda issues. The centre's focus shifted from national issues to local ACT issues when it was transferred to the Department of Territories in 1985. This transfer coincided with other service delivery moves in preparation for self-government.

Since 1985, WIRC has been managed within several portfolios including Health, Chief Minister's, Urban Services and is currently with the Department of Housing and Community Services as a sub-section of the Office for Women.

The Centre provides a free information and referral service on a range of issues in a supportive and confidential environment. This enables ACT women and their families to make informed decisions and achieve self-determination. Information about the services including a directory of women's services and a bi-annual calendar of "What's on for Women" in the ACT, are available on the Women ACT website at www.women.act.gov.au

The services currently provided by WIRC include:

- online directory of women's services;
- calendar of "*What's on for Women*" in the ACT;
- personal and professional development courses;
- information sessions and support groups;
- internet access and training through the Broadband for Seniors Program; and
- a lending library.

ACT Women's Return to Work Grants Program

The ACT Women's Return to Work Program (RTW) is an ACT Government initiative that assists to achieve increased financial independence by helping them prepare for, obtain and maintain employment.

The Program is funded through the ACT Office for Women in the Community Services Directorate. It is administered by Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC).

A grant of up to \$1,000 is available for the provision of practical support to women returning to the workforce by supporting them to attend courses, pay for childcare, clothing

to attend interviews as well as more formal training or education. It may also provide support for transport costs or the purchase of equipment, computers or texts books directly related to the needs of women returning to work.

The RTW Program targets women in receipt of low incomes and women who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, young women or women with disabilities, who have been in a caring role looking to enter or re-enter the workforce.



M-13/2019

41

Date Created 23/10/2013 at 11:05 AM
Date Registered 23/10/2013 at 11:08 AM

Record Type Ministerial Matter
Assignee Electronic Only - IN TRIM since 23/10/2013 at 11:05 AM
Owner Location Organisational Governance
Home Location Community Services Directorate
Disposition Active
Security Unclassified
Notes "Wednesday, 23 October 2013 at 11:08:08 AM (GMT+11:00) Beer, Kylie:"
received by DLO from JaCS DLO, forward to Directorate for action (OFW)

Last Action Date 23/10/2013 at 11:10 AM

Contained Records :- Record Number

Record Title

Action Name	Record Number	Record Title	Responsibility	Due	Start	Complete
	M-13/2019-001	letter				
Ack Letter sent, scan documents etc		Ministers Office		23/10/2013	23/10/2013	23/10/20
Allocate to Division		Ministerial Liaison Officer		23/10/2013	23/10/2013	23/10/20
Allocate to Coordinator		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		24/10/2013	23/10/2013	
Allocate to Manager		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		24/10/2013	24/10/2013	
Allocate to Author to Draft Response		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		24/10/2013	24/10/2013	
Draft Response		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		29/10/2013	24/10/2013	
Quality Control - Coordinator		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		30/10/2013	29/10/2013	
Request for Approval - Senior / Manager		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		31/10/2013	30/10/2013	
Request for Approval - Director		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		01/11/2013	31/10/2013	
Request for Approval - Executive Director		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		04/11/2013	01/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Organisational Governance		Organisational Governance - Coordin		04/11/2013	04/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Deputy Director-General		Deputy Director-General		05/11/2013	04/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Director-General		Director-General		06/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Dispatch to Minister		Organisational Governance - Coordin		06/11/2013	06/11/2013	
Quality Control - Ministerial Advisor		Ministers Office Advisors		07/11/2013	06/11/2013	
Unsigned brief returned to division		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		07/11/2013	07/11/2013	
Signed FINAL to DLO for Scanning		Ministers Office		08/11/2013	07/11/2013	
Signed brief returned to division		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		11/11/2013	08/11/2013	
Signed Copy Processed within Division		Organisational Governance - Coordin		12/11/2013	11/11/2013	

M-13/2019

Gray, John

From: ^{CU}
Sent: Thursday, 17 October 2013 6:53 PM
To: CORBELL

Simon,

Not sure if you remember me but Barbara Byrne and I were long-time members of the ALP when we were in Canberra. As you know Barb is gone but I am alive and living in Cairns (yes you CAN do both.) I keep up with Canberra news as much as possible. I was a tad surprised to read today that the Women's Info Service will close at the end of the month.

Women in the ACT have relied on this excellent facility for 35 years and to close it is an act worthy of Queensland's Campbell Newman or Abbott's Federal government; it is an act against women and an act mirroring the anti female attitudes of the LNP. Please ask the government (which had the honour of having the first female state or territory leader in Rosemary Follett) to retain this important asset and keep the centre open.

CU

TO

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Chief of Staff | ☐ Adviser |
| ☐ Senior Adviser | ☒ EO |
| ☐ Media Adviser | ☒ DLO |
| ☐ | |

PLEASE

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☒ Reply | ☐ Arrange meeting |
| ☐ Advise | ☐ For information |
| ☐ Noted | ☐ Refer to |
| ☐ File | ☐ Action |
| ☐ | |

COMMENT

21.10



Joy Burch MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS
MINISTER FOR WOMEN
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

COPY

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

41

Dear Ms 41

Thank you for your email of 17 October 2013 to Mr Simon Corbell MLA, about changes to information and referral services for women in the ACT. I am responding to you in my capacity as the Minister for Women.

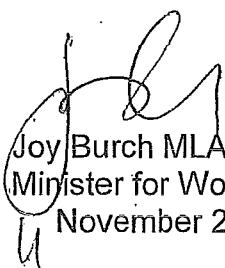
The ACT Government continues to be strongly committed to providing quality and accessible information and referral services to women in the ACT. The services and programs previously provided by the Women's Information and Referral Centre (the Centre) are not closing nor are they being reduced. The full suite of services previously provided by the Centre will be, where possible, further enhanced and delivered in other ways.

As you know, the Centre has been operating for 35 years from a central location in Canberra. You would therefore appreciate that over time the city has grown with large numbers of women residing in outer suburbs, many kilometres away from the centre of the city.

The recently announced changes to the way information and referral services are to be delivered aim to improve accessibility for women, especially vulnerable women, by providing the full suite of previously provided services at numerous locations around the ACT.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely


Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
November 2013

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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100
CANBERRA

M-13/2022

WIRC stats breakdown

Date Created
23/10/2013 at 1:44 PM
Date Registered
23/10/2013 at 1:53 PM

Record Type Ministerial Matter
Assignee Electronic Only - IN TRIM since 23/10/2013 at 1:44 PM
Owner Location Organisational Governance
Home Location Community Services Directorate
Disposition Active
Security Unclassified
Notes "Wednesday, 23 October 2013 at 1:53:07 PM (GMT+11:00) Beer, Kylie:"
received by DLO, forward to Directorate for action (OfW) dot points will be fine.

Last Action Date
23/10/2013 at 1:54 PM

Contained Records :- Record Number

Record Title

Action Name	Record Number	Record Title	Responsibility	Due	Start	Complete
	M-13/2022-001	request				
Ack Letter sent, scan documents etc		Ministers Office		23/10/2013	23/10/2013	23/10/20
Allocate to Division		Ministerial Liaison Officer		24/10/2013	23/10/2013	23/10/20
Allocate to Coordinator		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		24/10/2013	24/10/2013	
Allocate to Manager		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		24/10/2013	24/10/2013	
Allocate to Author to Draft Response		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		25/10/2013	24/10/2013	
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Request for Approval - Director		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		01/11/2013	31/10/2013	
Request for Approval - Executive Director		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		04/11/2013	01/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Organisational Governance		Organisational Governance - Coordin		05/11/2013	04/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Deputy Director-General		Deputy Director-General		05/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Director-General		Director-General		06/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Dispatch to Minister		Organisational Governance - Coordin		06/11/2013	06/11/2013	
Quality Control - Ministerial Advisor		Ministers Office Advisors		07/11/2013	06/11/2013	
Unsigned brief returned to division		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		07/11/2013	07/11/2013	
Signed FINAL to DLO for Scanning		Ministers Office		08/11/2013	07/11/2013	
Signed brief returned to division		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		11/11/2013	08/11/2013	
Signed Copy Processed within Division		Organisational Governance - Coordin		12/11/2013	11/11/2013	



ACT

Government

Community Services

Date	7 November 2013
To	Minister for Women • Director-General • Deputy Director-General
From	Director, Community Participation Group
File	M-13/2022
Subject	Women's Information and Referral Centre (the Centre) - Statistics

Critical Date

STANDARD

Purpose

To provide a breakdown of the data collected on the contact between the public and staff from the Centre, including the participants attending both fee and non-fee courses.

Background/Issues

The Centre was established in 1978 as a shopfront style to provide free information and referral service on a range of issues in a supportive and confidential environment.

Since September 2013, the Community Services Directorate has been implementing a redesign process for the delivery of services traditionally provided by the Centre

In 2012-13, WIRC responded to 12,375 contacts (a contact is defined as an 'occasion of service'), and provided 12 courses, eight support groups, 19 information sessions and eight workshops on a range of topics.

A list describing the top issues raised by clients, the demographics of the users of services offered by the Centre and a list of courses, support groups, information sessions and workshops is at **Attachment A**.

It would appear that a significant number of clients used the Centre to access publications and other information and educational and training opportunities.

Recommendation

That you:

- **Note** the information in the brief and at **Attachment A** regarding the data collected by the Women's Information and Referral Centre.

Nic Manikis
Director
Community Participation Group

NOTED/ AGREED/ NOT AGREED/ PLEASE DISCUSS

Minister for Women
Joy Burch MLA
November 2013

Contacts

- In 2012-13, Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) staff responded to 12,375 contacts (occasions of service) are breakdown of the contacts are:
 - Telephone: 5,693;
 - Face to face scheduled appointments: 398;
 - Drop in visits: 1,698;
 - Fax, post, email: 3,477;
 - Library and Internet: 380; and
 - Courses, support groups and/or information session attendees: 729.
- Of the 12,375 contacts:
 - 0.76% identified as men;
 - 6.95% from a culturally and linguistically diverse background;
 - 0.76% from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background;
 - 2.19% identified as being over the age of 55 years;
 - 0.97% identified as having a disability; and
 - 1.34% identified as being under the age of 25 years.
- In 2012-13, 14, 879 client issues/ information were raised. The top ten issues raised were:

○ 1,435 (9.64 %) General information; ○ 1,381 (9.28 %) WIRC Support Groups and Information Session; ○ 1,009 (6.78 %) WIRC Courses; ○ 923 (6.2 %) Domestic Violence; ○ 756 (5.08 %) Financial Matters;	○ 751 (5.05%) Legal; ○ 695 (4.67 %) Publications; ○ 685 (4.6 %) Mental Health; ○ 662 (4.45%) Counselling; and ○ 638 (4.29%) Education and Training.
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Courses, Support groups, Information sessions and Workshops facilitated by WIRC

- In 2012-13, Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) staff facilitated:
 - 12 courses;
 - eight support groups (five of were partnerships with ACT community organisations);
 - 19 information sessions; and
 - eight workshops.
- Of the courses, support groups, information sessions and workshops facilitated by WIRC during 2012-13:
 - all support groups and information were free to participants;
 - participants paid to attend 11 courses and one course was free to participants; and
 - participants paid to attend seven workshops and one workshop was free to participants.

Women that hold a Healthcare Card and/or pension card can apply concession to attend a course facilitated by WIRC.

- The total revenue generated for 2012-13 for courses and workshops facilitated by WIRC was \$12,330 and the expenditure was \$11,287.

The total expenditure does not include WIRC staffing costs to plan and administer the courses and workshops.

	July	August	September	October	November		December	January	February	March	April	May	June	TOTAL	
OCCASIONS OF SERVICE															
FEMALE															
Phone	377	405	380	378	406		267	351	525	428	346	550	350	4763	
Face to Face Appointment	39	30	26	29	28		14	16	37	22	16	35	18	310	
Face to Face Drop in visit	110	150	134	131	116		91	120	161	143	107	154	111	1528	
Email	222	176	195	210	210		62	158	234	200	186	284	171	2308	
Fax	1	1	51	2	1		2	2	2	4	0	0	3	69	
Post	30	21	31	20	19		25	24	22	17	14	32	16	271	
Library	10	8	5	4	3		4	6	2	7	15	11	3	78	
Internet	19	25	33	27	12		10	21	47	47	33	18	7	299	
SERVICE PROVIDERS															
Phone	76	69	76	85	114		59	83	96	63	62	86	60	929	
Face to Face Appointment	2	7	6	8	1		5	7	9	11	9	7	7	79	
Face to Face Drop in visit	5	13	27	15	16		4	6	16	11	9	3	7	132	
Email	47	45	40	80	104		64	74	68	66	48	75	50	761	
Fax	1	4	0	1	3		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	
Post	39	1	2	3	9		1	3	0	0	0	1	0	59	
Library	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Internet	0	0	0	0	0		0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	
MALE															
Phone	6	4	4	6	3		5	3	5	1	2	6	3	48	
Face to Face Appointment	0	1	3	1	0		0	0	4	0	0	0	0	9	
Face to Face Drop in visit	2	2	5	7	1		5	1	3	3	2	2	4	37	
Email	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fax	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Post	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Library	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Internet	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
														TOTAL	
														PHONE	5,693
														FACE TO FACE APPOINTMENT	398
														FACE TO FACE DROP IN VISIT	1698
														EMAIL	3,068
														FAX	79
														POST	330
														LIBRARY	78
														INTERNET	302
SUPPORT GROUPS, COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS			158				127			171			273	729	
														TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASSIONS OF SERVICES 2012-13	12,375

CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS														
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people	44	62	83	73	63		36	74	111	64	46	116	95	867
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	7	12	9	6	5		3	8	12	16	3	11	4	96
Ageing- over 55 yrs old	15	29	29	30	15		12	17	25	35	10	37	20	274
People with a disability	11	10	8	12	14		10	7	11	12	10	9	7	121
Youth - under 25 yrs old	9	15	12	15	8		7	11	18	9	5	31	28	168
ISSUES/INFORMATION														
Accommodation	33	38	30	39	32		25	23	35	38	25	31	31	380
Ageing	10	20	12	11	15		7	12	10	16	14	5	5	137
Counselling	53	56	58	59	63		33	48	60	58	60	59	55	662
Courses and Support Groups	29	49	31	49	59		31	47	53	31	41	49	30	499
Disability	9	14	9	17	10		14	16	18	18	13	13	6	157
Domestic Violence	56	75	87	62	73		54	71	93	84	84	99	85	923
Drug & Alcohol	28	23	35	34	30		18	18	39	35	34	39	25	358
Education and Training	48	71	52	52	55		37	66	63	37	47	66	44	638
Financial Matters	48	72	74	59	63		35	62	80	67	68	70	58	756
General Information	128	105	107	97	142		89	89	162	163	115	144	94	1435
Health - General	21	31	20	36	25		27	9	20	13	27	35	31	295
Human Rights/Workplace	6	7	5	11	11		5	7	7	10	8	9	10	96
Indigenous	3	6	8	3	9		4	11	5	9	6	8	5	77
Legal	58	60	73	68	71		41	47	82	66	53	63	69	751
Loss and Grief	19	25	22	18	17		5	11	17	23	12	21	12	202
Men's	2	5	2	10	4		3	10	2	2	4	1	6	51
Mental Health	46	61	58	68	67		32	39	57	64	60	74	59	685
Migrant	23	40	40	29	36		20	28	49	34	25	42	26	392
Parenting	28	28	28	37	48		27	26	39	27	17	40	24	369
Publications	70	67	51	69	78		57	79	64	33	28	56	43	695
Problem Gambling	3	6	4	3	5		2	6	1	7	2	5	1	45
Recreation/Leisure	3	5	7	8	4		6	3	7	5	2	6	2	58
Relationship Issues	41	54	50	48	59		21	37	66	56	52	48	37	569
Return to Work Grants	41	46	54	46	38		34	46	50	38	21	45	31	490
Separation	41	45	42	42	50		27	36	48	44	36	45	47	503
Sexual/Ritual Abuse	2	4	6	13	3		4	2	3	5	3	9	1	55
Suicide	6	8	5	10	5		3	3	2	5	3	5	4	59
Un/Employment	30	57	49	35	42		36	39	51	33	35	55	42	504
WiRC courses	60	91	130	116	51		33	109	95	81	69	94	80	1009
WiRC support groups and information sessions	167	87	133	156	115		42	70	141	95	92	171	112	1381
Women's Health	21	45	32	58	47		20	42	41	47	39	47	44	483
Youth	14	12	5	14	11		11	17	23	14	10	22	12	165
NUMBER OF CLIENT ISSUES/INFORMATION RAISED	1147	1313	1319	1377	1338		803	1129	1483	1258	1105	1476	1131	
TOTAL NUMBER OF OF CLIENT ISSUES/INFORMATION RAISED - 2012-13														14879

FIRST QUARTER					
SUPPORT GROUPS, COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS	ENROLMENTS	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	FEES	NO FEES	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
COURSES					
Seven Types of Busy	19	4	X		17
Self Esteem and Assertiveness	9	6	X		8
SUPPORT GROUPS					
Domestic Violence Support Group	10	8		X	6
INFORMATION SESSIONS					
Family Law Information Session - Women's Legal Centre	12	1		X	6
Thinking Thursday - Presentation Skills	33	1		X	33
Thinking Thursday - Presentation Skills - Repeat	33	1		X	33
Thinking Thursday - Listening for Strength	33	1		X	33
Taming your Finances - CARE	12	1		X	10
WORKSHOPS					
Communication Skills and Rapport	12	1	X		12
					146

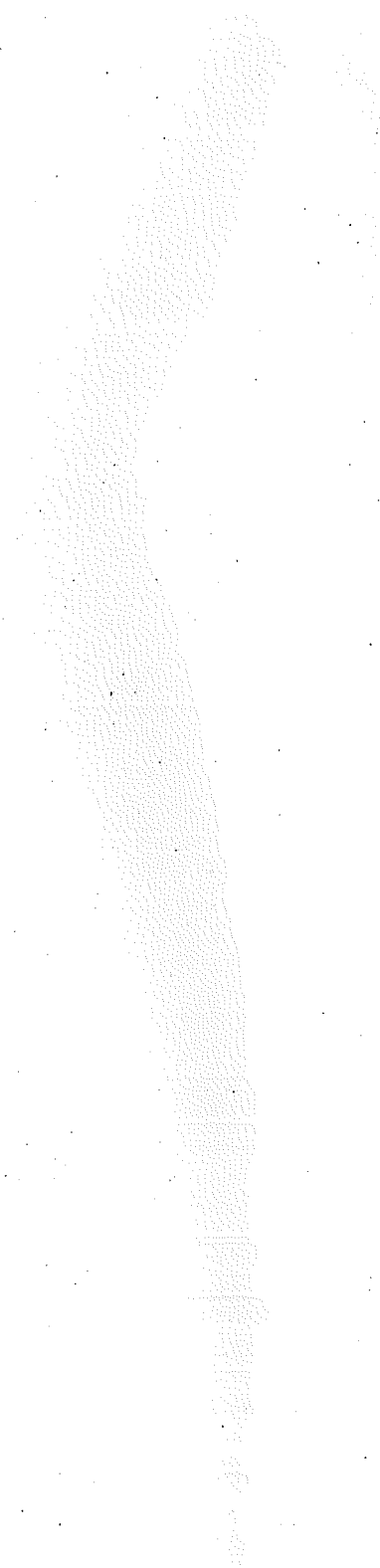
SECOND QUARTER					
SUPPORT GROUPS, COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS	ENROLMENTS	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	FEES	NO FEES	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
COURSES					
Your Self Worth and Wellbeing	11	4	X		10
Financial Empowerment	7	2	X		5
Self Esteem After Domestic Violence	16	6			15
Moving On After Separation	16	8		X	12
INFORMATION SESSIONS					
Thinking Thursday - The Happiness Experiment	35	1		X	33
Thinking Thursday - Effective Ways of Dealing with Change	35	1		X	33
Return to Work - Career Information Sessions	14	4		X	11
WORKSHOPS					
Negotiating Skills for the Workplace	8	1	X		8
					127

THRID QUARTER					
SUPPORT GROUPS, COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS	ENROLMENTS	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	FEES	NO FEES	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
COURSES					
Emotional Mastery	15	5	X		13
Assertiveness and Conflict Management - After separation	6	6	X		6
SUPPORT GROUPS					
It is Time to Talk - Domestic Violence Support Group	12	8		X	9
INFORMATION SESSIONS					
Thinking Thursday - Getting Organised-Back in Control	38	1		X	33
Thinking Thursday - The Benefits of Mentoring	35	1		X	35
Relationship Separation Legal Session - Womens's Legal Centre	12	1		X	8
Financial Friday	10	1		X	8
Careeer Information Sessions - Return to Work	24	4		X	15
WORKSHOPS					
The Five Secrets of Self Confidence	17	1	X		17
Improving your Relationships for Life	14	1	X		11
Public Speaking for Women	16	1	X		16
					171

FOURTH QUARTER					
SUPPORT GROUPS, COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS	ENROLMENTS	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	FEES	NO FEES	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
COURSES					
Managing Change	10	2	X		8
Healthy Relationships	10	4	X		7
Healthy Relationships 2	9	3	X		6
Self Esteem and Assertiveness		6	X		6
SUPPORT GROUPS					
Self Esteem and Assertiveness for Carers ACT		6		X	6
Self Esteem and Assertiveness Gunyah Partnership		6		X	10
Self Esteem and Assertiveness for Carers		2		X	8
It is Time to talk - Domestic Violence Group	11	8		X	7
Domestic Violence Partnership Gunyah	15	8		X	15
Domestic Violence Partnership NorthSide Community Services	15	3		X	15
INFORMATION SESSIONS					
Thinking Thursday- Interactive Presentations	33	1		X	33
Thinking Thursday - Building Resilience in the workplace	35	1		X	33
Thinking Thursday - Building resilience in the workplace - repeat	30	1		X	28
Thinking Thursday - Overcoming Procrastination	33	1		X	30
Relationship Separation - Women's Legal Centre	10	1		X	10
Financial Independence	12	1		X	12
WORKSHOPS					
The Five Secrets of Self Confidence	8	1	X		7
At Home Business Seminar with Lighthouse	20	1	X	X	19
Negotiating with Emotional Intelligence	15	1	X		13
					253

%
6.95
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|



CM Ministers

Trim Number

M-13/2058

Ministerial / Correspondence Tracker

Date Due to
Minister's Office

Date Due to
Director-General

Date Due to
Organisational
Governance

Date Due to
Executive Director

Date Due to
Director

Subject: Mary Porter Correspondence - WIRC

WHAT IS REQUIRED

☐ Correspondence ☐ Meeting Brief ☒ Brief ☐ Question on Notice
☐ Media/ Function ☐ Dot points ☐ Other Letter

SIGN OFF FOR RESPONSE

Director-General

Natalie Howson

Deputy Director-General

Sue Chapman

Organisational Governance

Tracy Chester

Executive Director

Meredith Whitten

Director

Nic Manikis

Business Unit Name

Office for Women

Senior Manager

Action/Contact Officer

Date

Date

Date

Date

Date

Date

Telephone Ext 78165

CHECK LIST

☒ Original Documentation ☐ Reply ☐ Any attachments

☐ Notify DLO that dot points for Minister Burch
Speech (Attachment __) Media alert (Attachment __) Media release (Attachment __) need to be provided to
Media Advisor via TRIM Notified / / 20 Initials _____

☐ Directorate camera required (book through Outlook calendar at [CSD Media Camera](#))

☐ Directorate banner required (book through Outlook calendar at [CSD Media Banner](#))

☐ Material to be uploaded to CSD Internet (email [CSD Webmaster](#) - allow 3 working days)

Organisational Governance use only

☐ CM Function Brief Mailbox (CM Events only)

To be completed by Minister's Office

☐ Satisfactory ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:



M-13/2058

Mary Porter Correspondence - WIRC

Date Created
29/10/2013 at 4:19 PM
Date Registered
29/10/2013 at 4:21 PM

Record Type Ministerial Matter
Assignee Electronic Only - IN TRIM since 29/10/2013 at 4:19 PM
Owner Location Organisational Governance
Home Location Community Services Directorate
Disposition Active
Security Unclassified
Notes "Tuesday, 29 October 2013 at 4:21:44 PM (GMT+11:00) Beer, Kylie:"
received by DLO, forward to directorate for action (office for Women)

Last Action Date
29/10/2013 at 4:41 PM

Contained Records :- Record Number

Record Title

M-13/2058-002

porter letter

M-13/2058-001

Mary Porter letter

Action Name	Responsibility	Due	Start	Complete
Ack Letter sent, scan documents etc	Ministers Office	30/10/2013	29/10/2013	29/10/20
Allocate to Division	Ministerial Liaison Officer	30/10/2013	30/10/2013	29/10/20
Allocate to Coordinator	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	30/10/2013	30/10/2013	
Allocate to Manager	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	31/10/2013	30/10/2013	
Allocate to Author to Draft Response	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	31/10/2013	31/10/2013	
Draft Response	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	05/11/2013	31/10/2013	
Quality Control - Coordinator	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	05/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Senior / Manager	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	06/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Director	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	07/11/2013	06/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Executive Director	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	08/11/2013	07/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Organisational Governance	Organisational Governance - Coordin	11/11/2013	08/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Deputy Director-General	Deputy Director-General	11/11/2013	11/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Director-General	Director-General	12/11/2013	11/11/2013	
Dispatch to Minister	Organisational Governance - Coordin	13/11/2013	12/11/2013	
Quality Control - Ministerial Advisor	Ministers Office Advisors	14/11/2013	13/11/2013	
Unsigned brief returned to division	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	14/11/2013	14/11/2013	
Signed FINAL to DLO for Scanning	Ministers Office	15/11/2013	14/11/2013	
Signed brief returned to division	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	18/11/2013	15/11/2013	
Signed Copy Processed within Division	Organisational Governance - Coordin	19/11/2013	18/11/2013	



ACT
Government

Community Services

Date

8 November 2013

To

Minister for Women

• Director-General

• Deputy Director-General

From

Director, Community Participation Group

Subject

Mary Porter Correspondence - Women's Information Referral Centre's (WiRC)

Critical Date

STANDARD

Purpose

To provide you with a response to correspondence you received on 28 October 2013 from Ms Porter AM MLA, regarding ⁴¹ s' concerns about the changes to information and referral services for women in the ACT.

Background/Issues

You recently announced changes to the model of service delivery for the WiRC. Following the announcement, the media has portrayed this decision as the closure of services to women in the ACT; Creating some confusion amongst the sector, particularly concern to the service providers to WiRC.

⁴¹ has raised concerns about the changes to information and referral services for women in the ACT. For the past 22 years, she has facilitated courses and workshops at the Centre.

We are aware that ⁴¹ has also received advice from the Chair of your Women's Advisory Council encouraging her to provide specific concerns about the impact of the relocation of women's services directly to the Chair of the Council (**Attachment A**)

You recently wrote to ⁴¹ in her role as a service provider clarifying the future of the Centre at **Attachment B**.

A letter of response to Ms Porter has been prepared for your signature at **Attachment C**.

Recommendation

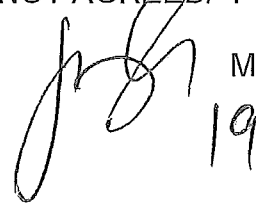
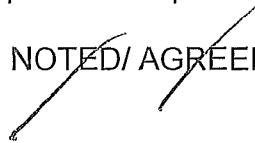
That you:

- **sign** the letter to Ms Mary Porter MLA at Attachment C;
- note your previous letter to u1 at Attachment B;
- note the exchange of emails between u1 and the Chair, Womens Advisory Council at Attachment A; and
- **note** the information in the brief.



Nic Manikis
Director Community Participation Group

NOTED/ AGREED/ NOT AGREED/ PLEASE DISCUSS



Minister for Women
Joy Burch MLA
November 2013

Manikis, Nic

From: Webster, Fiona [Fiona.Webster@...]
Sent: Thursday, 7 November 2013 4:50 PM
To: Manikis, Nic
Cc: Chapman, Sue
Subject: FW: Re : the closure of WIRC [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Nic/Sue
fyi

Fiona Webster

-----Original Message-----

From: Webster, Fiona
Sent: Thursday, 7 November 2013 2:36 PM
To:
Subject: RE: Re : the closure of WIRC [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks for your message

The Chief Minister, Minister for Women, and the Community Services Directorate have emphasised publicly that WIRC's services and programs will continue to be delivered, but the WIRC office on London Circuit is closing. The services and programs will continue in different settings around the regions and there will be a central hub administered by the Office for Women located at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre anchoring the regional effort. I understand there is a genuine saving in this exercise in so far as the lease on the property on London Circuit is worth something in the order of \$80,000 per annum. There may be other savings to be made through a new model of delivery, but these have not been quantified at this stage, as far as I know.

I have raised and will raise your concerns again about a review process. My understanding is that the current process of consultation includes consideration of the profile of existing WIRC users and related service providers, the value of services provided and how they should best and most effectively continue to be delivered.

I would be grateful if you could outline in more detail the concerns you raise in relation to community safety and potential impacts in relation to non-custodial sentencing arrangements, so these can be fed into the process and given a proper hearing. You could either send this information to me, and I will send it on through our MACW representative, or I can send it directly to the executive leading the consultation process.

The intention is very much that the Government work together with the community and the community sector to establish what is the best way forward in terms of delivering WIRC services - to that end, I would really encourage you to work with them to ensure the services you think need to continue are considered and evaluated properly.

Kind regards
Fiona

Dr Fiona Webster

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Wednesday, 6 November 2013 3:19 PM
To: Webster, Fiona
Subject: Re : the closure of WIRC

Dear Ms Webster

You may recall we spoke in late October regards the proposed closure of WIRC. I am writing to see if there has been any progress in relation to the concerns I raised with you about the closure.

The primary concern is that there is no independent evidence substantiating the Minister's claim that closing the Centre will represent a genuine saving. There are a range of consequences that will occur including implications for community safety and potential impacts in relation to non-custodial sentencing arrangements which may lead to greater imprisonment of women in the ACT.

Could you please advise what attention is being paid to these and other issues regarding the proposed closure.

Thank you

Kind Regards

el

IMPORTANT: This message, and any attachments to it, contains information that is confidential and may also be the subject of legal professional or other privilege. If you are not the intended recipient of this message, you must not review, copy, disseminate or disclose its contents to any other party or take action in reliance of any material contained within it. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately by return email informing them of the mistake and delete all copies of the message from your computer system.



Joy Burch MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS
MINISTER FOR WOMEN
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Judy Croston

41

Dear Ms Croston

Services to Women in the ACT to Continue

I recently announced a change in the way women's information and referral services will be delivered into the future in the ACT.

Importantly, the services provided by the Women's Information and Referral Centre will continue to be delivered at different locations across the ACT after the current office accommodating the Centre is closed at the end of the year.

The availability of services at different locations around the ACT will enable women to more easily access the assistance they require. In addition we will be looking at ways to more effectively utilise technology so that these services can be made even more accessible.

The expiry of the Centre's accommodation lease on London Circuit in the city in January 2014 provides a good opportunity to review the existing suite of services and programs to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate to the needs of women in the ACT. The assessment of services and programs is being undertaken in the context of the availability of relevant services and programs for women located across the ACT.

It is also important to note, that the Return to Work grants that have been assisting women to take up employment after periods out of the workforce will continue and be even more accessible in different locations in the north and south of Canberra. So far, over 700 women in the ACT have benefitted from this initiative and I remain committed to ensuring that this assistance continues to be provided to women so that they can achieve their full potential.

The calendar of 'What's on for Women in the ACT', internet access and training through the *Broadband for Seniors Program*, partnerships to deliver support programs; and the lending library will all continue to be provided following the expiry of the lease of the London Circuit premises.

The ACT Government remains committed to providing quality, easily accessible and appropriate services to women in the ACT.

Yours sincerely

Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
11 November 2013

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6205 0020 Fax (02) 6205 0495

Email BURCH@act.gov.au Twitter: @JoyBurchMLA Facebook: www.facebook.com/joyburchmla

100
CANBERRA



ACT

Government

Community Services

41

Dear ,

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The ACT Government remains committed to providing quality, easily accessible and appropriate services to women in the ACT.

Yours sincerely

Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
November 2013



Joy Burch MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS
MINISTER FOR WOMEN
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

COPY

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Mary Porter AM MLA
Member for Ginninderra
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Porter *Mary*

Thank you for your letter of 24 October 2013, about ⁴¹ concerns about the changes to information and referral services for women in the ACT.

For the past 22 years, ⁴¹ has facilitated courses and workshops at the Women's Information and Referral Centre (the Centre). I have written to ⁴¹ in her role as a service provider clarifying the future of the services provided by the Centre.

The ACT Government continues to be strongly committed to providing quality and accessible information and referral services to vulnerable women in the ACT. The services and programs previously provided by the Centre are not closing nor are they being reduced. The full suite of services previously provided by the Centre will be delivered in other ways and, where possible, further enhanced.

As you know, the Centre has been operating for 35 years from a central location in Canberra. You would appreciate that over time the city has grown with large numbers of vulnerable women residing in outer suburbs, away from the city centre.

We continue to engage and consult with key stakeholders about the development of a new service delivery model for the services and programs for women in our community.

Thank you again for bringing ⁴¹ concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Joy Burch
Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women

19 November 2013

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6205 0020 Fax (02) 6205 0495

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CANBERRA

m-13/2058



Mary Porter AM MLA
Labor Member for Ginninderra



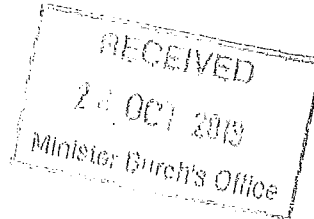
ph: +61 2 6205 0100
fax: +61 2 6205 0040

web: www.maryporter.net
e-mail: porter@parliament.act.gov.au

*Deputy Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly
Chair of the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs
Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts*

24 October 2013

Ms Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601



Dear Ms Burch

I am writing to you on behalf of ... (U) regarding her concerns about the recent closure of the Women's Information and Referral Centre.

(U) is concerned that with the closure of the Women's Information and Referral Centre woman will no longer be able to access the services offered by the centre. For the reason that she believes that with the closure of a centre which targets all women, a limited number of women will continue to be targeted by the remaining services titled: "Children and Family Centres", "First Point/Gateway Services" and "Multicultural Women's Advocacy Inc".

(U) would like to be reassured how "no loss of service" will occur, given the above reasoning. In particular, (U) asks: how will the government ensure that all women in the Canberra community are targeted? Furthermore, is there a process in which the transition of services which will continue to target and support all women?

(U) would also like to be informed of the reason/s why the centre is being closed and the evidence of which the decision was based on. Further to this, (U) questions if the decision based on an independent cost-benefit analysis?

(U) would also like to be informed of the consultation process in which this decision to close the centre was made. Particularly why was the public not advised or consulted before the decision or the media announcement made? Further to this she would like to know how a member of the public can keep themselves informed of such developments in the future.

I would appreciate if you could respond to (U) concerns and queries. I thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and I look forward to receiving a response.

Yours sincerely

Mary Porter AM MLA
Member for Ginninderra

To

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Minister | ☒ DLO |
| ☐ Chief of Staff | ☐ OM |
| ☐ Senior Advisor | |
| ☐ Media Advisor | |

Please

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☒ Reply | ☐ Arrange Meeting |
| ☐ Advise | ☐ FYI |
| ☐ Noted | ☐ Refer to |
| ☐ File | ☐ Action |

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Civic Square, London Circuit (GPO Box 1020) Canberra ACT 2601

T (02) 6205 0439 F (02) 6205 3109 E secretariat@parliament.act.gov.au W www.parliament.act.gov.au



M-13/2094

Kate Lundy Correspondence - WIRC

Date Created
04/11/2013 at 2:14 PM
Date Registered
04/11/2013 at 2:16 PM

Record Type Ministerial Matter
Assignee Electronic Only - IN TRIM since 04/11/2013 at 2:14 PM
Owner Location Organisational Governance
Home Location Community Services Directorate
Disposition Active
Security Unclassified
Notes "Monday, 4 November 2013 at 2:16:22 PM (GMT+11:00) Beer, Kylie:"
received by DLO, forward to Directorate for Action (OfW)

Last Action Date
04/11/2013 at 2:17 PM

Contained Records :- Record Number

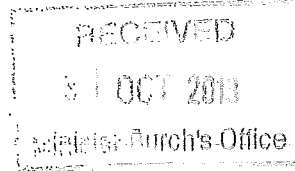
Record Title

Action Name	M-13/2094-001	Lundy Letter	Responsibility	Due	Start	Complete
Ack Letter sent, scan documents etc		Ministers Office		04/11/2013	04/11/2013	04/11/20
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Allocate to Coordinator		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		05/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Allocate to Manager		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		05/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Allocate to Author to Draft Response		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		06/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Draft Response		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		11/11/2013	06/11/2013	
Quality Control - Coordinator		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		11/11/2013	11/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Senior / Manager		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		12/11/2013	11/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Director		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		13/11/2013	12/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Executive Director		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		14/11/2013	13/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Organisational Governance		Organisational Governance - Coordin		15/11/2013	14/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Deputy Director-General		Deputy Director-General		15/11/2013	15/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Director-General		Director-General		18/11/2013	15/11/2013	
Dispatch to Minister		Organisational Governance - Coordin		18/11/2013	18/11/2013	
Quality Control - Ministerial Advisor		Ministers Office Advisors		19/11/2013	18/11/2013	
Unsigned brief returned to division		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		19/11/2013	19/11/2013	
Signed FINAL to DLO for Scanning		Ministers Office		20/11/2013	19/11/2013	
Signed brief returned to division		Coordinator - (please assign to appro		21/11/2013	20/11/2013	
Signed Copy Processed within Division		Organisational Governance - Coordin		22/11/2013	21/11/2013	



SENATOR KATE LUNDY

SENATOR FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Burch

I am writing to you in your capacity as ACT Minister for Women regarding the closure of the Women's Information Referral Centre (WiRC).

I have been approached by a number of concerned constituents who believe that the service fulfils an essential and ongoing role.

I note that your office has already provided me with some information regarding WiRC's closure however I would appreciate some more in relation to the reasoning behind the closure and the restructuring of WiRC's services.

Specifically, could you please explain what processes will be put in place to ensure that women with limited or infrequent access to the internet will still be able to draw on WiRC's important services?

Further, what impact will the closure have on women living in the city region who rely on WiRC's services? Will these services be readily available in the city or will they need to travel to a suburban centre to access them?

Finally, have processes been put in place to ensure that women who are currently utilising WiRC's services are able to easily find out where these services are being relocated to?

Any help regarding this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Kate Lundy

- ☐ Comment
- ☐ File
- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Advise
- ☒ Reply
- ☐ Please
- ☐ Media Advisor
- ☐ Senior Advisor
- ☐ Chief of Staff
- ☒ Minister
- ☒ DLO
- ☐ OM
- ☐ Arrange Meeting
- ☐ FYI
- ☐ Refer to
- ☐ Action



Joy Burch MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS
MINISTER FOR WOMEN
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

COPY

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Senator Kate Lundy
Senator for the Australian Capital Territory
Law Society Building
11 London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Senator Lundy

Kate

Thank you for your letter received on 31 October 2013 about the changes to information and referral services for women in the ACT.

The ACT Government continues to be strongly committed to providing quality and accessible information and referral services to vulnerable women in the ACT. The services and programs previously provided by the Centre are not closing nor are they being reduced. The full suite of services previously provided by the Centre will be, where possible, further enhanced and delivered in other ways.

As you know, the Centre has been operating for 35 years from a central location in Canberra. You would appreciate that over time the city has grown with large numbers of vulnerable women residing in outer suburbs, away from the city centre.

The recently announced changes to the way information and referral services are to be delivered aim to improve accessibility for vulnerable women by providing the full suite of previously provided services at numerous locations around the ACT.

It is also important to note that the ACT Women's Return to Work Grants that assist women to take up employment after periods out of the workforce will continue and will be even more accessible in different locations in the north and south of Canberra. I remain committed to ensuring that this assistance continues to be provided to women so that they can achieve their full potential.

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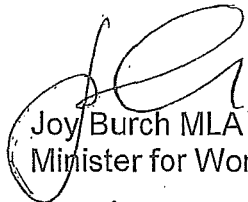
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The calendar of *'What's on for Women in the ACT'*, internet access and training through the Broadband for Seniors Program, partnerships to deliver support programs; and the lending library will continue to be provided following the expiry of the lease of the current Womens and Information Referral Centre premises on London Circuit in January 2014.

The ACT Government remains committed to providing quality, easily accessible and appropriate services to women in the ACT.

Thank you again for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women

18 November 2013

CM Ministers
(Number if available)

Trim Number
M-13/2097

Ministerial / Correspondence Tracker

Date Due to
Minister's Office
8/11/2013

Date Due to
Director-General
7/11/2013

Date Due to
Organisational
Governance
6/11/2013

Date Due to
Executive Director
5/11/2013

Date Due to
Director
4/11/2013

Subject: Women's Information and Referral Centre (WiRC) - Communication

WHAT IS REQUIRED

☒ Correspondence ☐ Meeting Brief ☒ Brief ☐ Question on Notice
☐ Media/ Function ☐ Dot points ☐ Other Letter

SIGN OFF FOR RESPONSE

Director-General

Deputy Director-General

Organisational Governance

Executive Director

Senior Director

Business Unit Name

Senior Manager

Action/Contact Officer

CPG- OFW- WiRC

Nic Manikis

Date

Date 7/11/13

Date 6/11/13

Date

Date 5/10/13

Date 5/11/13

Telephone 50522

CHECK LIST

- ☐ Original Documentation ☐ Reply ☐ Any attachments
- ☐ Notify DLO that dot points for Minister Burch / Minister Barr / Minister Rattenbury Speech (Attachment __) Media alert (Attachment __) Media release (Attachment __) need to be provided to Media Advisor via TRIM Notified / / 20 Initials _____
- ☐ Directorate camera required (book through Outlook calendar at [CSD Media Camera](#))
- ☐ Directorate banner required (book through Outlook calendar at [CSD Media Banner](#))
- ☐ Material to be uploaded to CSD Internet (email [CSD Webmaster](#) - allow 3 working days)

Organisational Governance use only

☐ CM Function Brief Mailbox (CM Events only)

To be completed by Minister's Office

☐ Satisfactory ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:



ACT
Government

Community Services

Date 4 November 2013

To Minister for Women

- Director-General
- Deputy Director-General

cc

From Director Community Participation Group

File no M-13/2097

Subject Women's Information and Referral Centre (WiRC) - Communication.

Critical Date

- HIGH PRIORITY (Due within 5 business days)

Sensitivities

Some key service providers to WiRC have expressed concern about a perceived decision to 'close' WiRC.

Purpose

To propose a letter for you to send to those who provide services to WiRC clarifying the government's position on the future of WiRC and womens services in the ACT.

Background/Issues

You announced a change to the model of service delivery for the WIRC. Following this announcement, the media has chosen to portray this decision as the closure of services to women in the ACT. This has created some confusion amongst the sector and is of particular concern to service providers to WiRC.

It is proposed that you send a letter clarifying the government's position on the future of services to women in the ACT. Letters to service providers have been prepared for your signature at **Attachment A**.

On 31 October 2013, ⁴¹ wrote to Minister Corbell raising her concerns about the changes to information and referral services for women in the ACT. The letter to ⁴¹ reflects this correspondence.

Consultation

We continue to engage and consult with key representatives from the local womens sector, WiRC staff and the CPSU about the development of a new service delivery model for the services and programs previously delivered by WiRC.

Recommendation

That you:

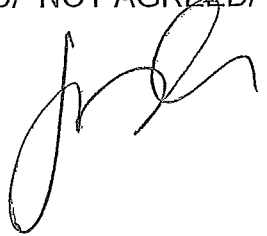
- Sign the proposed letters at Attachment A; and
- Note the information in this brief



Nic Manikis
Director
Community Participation Group

NOTED/ AGREED/ NOT AGREED/ PLEASE DISCUSS

/November/2013
Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women





Joy Burch MLA

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MINISTER FOR WOMEN
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Rhian Williams

41

Dear Ms Williams

Services to Women in the ACT to Continue

I recently announced a change in the way women's information and referral services will be delivered into the future in the ACT.

I also refer to your letter to Minister Corbell dated 31 October 2013 about the changes to information and referral services for women in the ACT. I am responding to you in my capacity as the Minister for Women.

Importantly, the services provided by the Women's Information and Referral Centre will continue to be delivered at different locations across the ACT after the current office accommodating the Centre is closed at the end of the year.

The availability of services at different locations around the ACT will enable women to more easily access the assistance they require. In addition we will be looking at ways to more effectively utilise technology so that these services can be made even more accessible.

The expiry of the Centre's accommodation lease on London Circuit in the city in January 2014 provides a good opportunity to review the existing suite of services and programs to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate to the needs of women in the ACT. The assessment of services and programs is being undertaken in the context of the availability of relevant services and programs for women located across the ACT.

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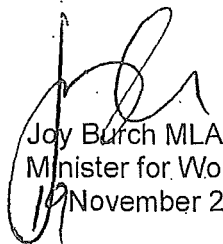
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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

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The ACT Government remains committed to providing quality, easily accessible and appropriate services to women in the ACT.

Yours sincerely



Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
19 November 2013

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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Emma Grey
41

Dear Ms Grey

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Yours sincerely

Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
4 November 2013

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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Judy Croston

Dear Ms Croston

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Yours sincerely

Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
11 November 2013

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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Emma Grey

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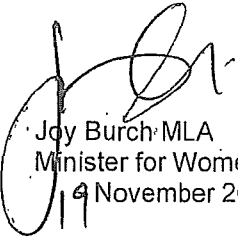
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Yours sincerely


Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
4 November 2013

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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Kate Price

Dear Ms Price

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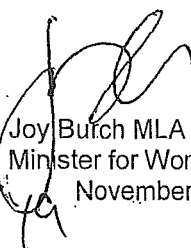
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Yours sincerely


Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
November 2013



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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Lucy Baker

41

Dear Ms Baker

Services to Women in the ACT to Continue

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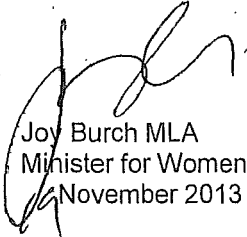
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Yours sincerely


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Minister for Women
November 2013

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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Orlie Beer

41

Dear Ms Beer

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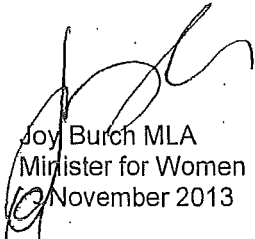
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Yours sincerely


Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
16 November 2013

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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Anna Anderson

Dear Ms Anderson

Services to Women in the ACT to Continue

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Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Nasrin Bhorania-Lucas

41

Dear Ms Bhorania-Lucas

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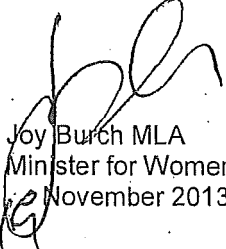
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Minister for Women
16 November 2013

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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Aimee Raymonde Leeumans

41

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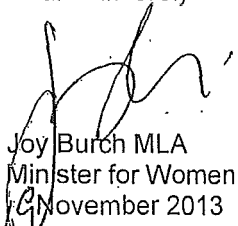
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100
CANBERRA



Joy Burch MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS
MINISTER FOR WOMEN
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

COPY

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Jen Barnett

41

Dear Ms Barnett

Services to Women in the ACT to Continue

I recently announced a change in the way women's information and referral services will be delivered into the future in the ACT.

Importantly, the services provided by the Women's Information and Referral Centre will continue to be delivered at different locations across the ACT after the current office accommodating the Centre is closed at the end of the year.

The availability of services at different locations around the ACT will enable women to more easily access the assistance they require. In addition we will be looking at ways to more effectively utilise technology so that these services can be made even more accessible.

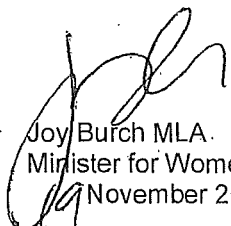
The expiry of the Centre's accommodation lease on London Circuit in the city in January 2014 provides a good opportunity to review the existing suite of services and programs to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate to the needs of women in the ACT. The assessment of services and programs is being undertaken in the context of the availability of relevant services and programs for women located across the ACT.

It is also important to note, that the Return to Work grants that have been assisting women to take up employment after periods out of the workforce will continue and be even more accessible in different locations in the north and south of Canberra. So far, over 700 women in the ACT have benefitted from this initiative and I remain committed to ensuring that this assistance continues to be provided to women so that they can achieve their full potential.

The calendar of 'What's on for Women in the ACT', internet access and training through the *Broadband for Seniors Program*, partnerships to deliver support programs; and the lending library will all continue to be provided following the expiry of the lease of the London Circuit premises.

The ACT Government remains committed to providing quality, easily accessible and appropriate services to women in the ACT.

Yours sincerely


Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
19 November 2013

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

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COPY

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Annabel Mayo

41

Dear Ms Mayo

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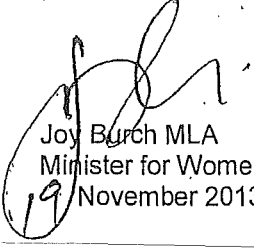
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Yours sincerely


Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
19 November 2013

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COPY

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Carol Guy

41

Dear Ms Guy

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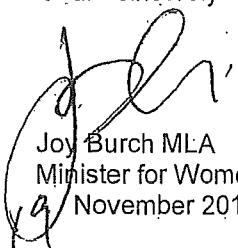
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Yours sincerely


Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
9 November 2013

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

COPY

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Karla Ries

41

Dear Ms Ries

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Yours sincerely

Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
29 November 2013

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CANBERRA

CM Ministers

Trim Number
M-13/2099

Ministerial / Correspondence Tracker

Date Due to
Minister's Office

Date Due to
Director-General

Date Due to
Organisational
Governance

Date Due to
Executive Director

Date Due to
Director

Subject: 41 Correspondence - WIRC

WHAT IS REQUIRED

☐ Correspondence ☐ Meeting Brief ☒ Brief ☐ Question on Notice
☐ Media/ Function ☐ Dot points ☐ Other Letter

SIGN OFF FOR RESPONSE

Director-General	Natalie Howson	Date	_____
Deputy Director-General	Sue Chapman	Date	_____
Organisational Governance	Tracy Chester	Date	_____
Executive Director	David Mathews	Date	_____
Director	Nic Manikis	Date	_____
Business Unit Name	Office for Women		
Senior Manager		Date	_____
Action/Contact Officer		Telephone	Ext 78165

CHECK LIST

☒ Original Documentation ☐ Reply ☐ Any attachments

☐ Notify DLO that dot points for Minister Burch
Speech (Attachment __) Media alert (Attachment __) Media release (Attachment __) need to be provided to
Media Advisor via TRIM Notified / / 20 Initials _____

☐ Directorate camera required (book through Outlook calendar at [CSD Media C](#))

☐ Directorate banner required (book through Outlook calendar at [CSD](#))

☐ Material to be uploaded to CSD Internet (email [CSD Web](#))

Organisational Governance use only

☐ CM Function Brief Mailbox (CM Events only)

To be completed by Minister's Office

☐ Satisfactory ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Jackie
*I am not signing
this off - we have
another letter
from Min Burch
to Ms 41
I have discussed
with Michelle
Nic*



M-13/2099

41

correspondence re WIRC

Date Created 04/11/2013 at 5:14 PM
Date Registered 04/11/2013 at 5:16 PM

Record Type Ministerial Matter
Assignee Electronic Only - IN TRIM since 04/11/2013 at 5:14 PM
Owner Location Organisational Governance
Home Location Community Services Directorate
Disposition Active
Security Unclassified
Notes "Monday, 4 November 2013 at 5:16:10 PM (GMT+11:00) Beer, Kylie:"
received by DLO, forward to directorate for action (OfW)

Last Action Date
04/11/2013 at 5:16 PM

Contained Records :- Record Number

Record Title

Action Name	Record Number	Record Title	Due	Start	Complete
	M-13/2099-001	letter			
Ack Letter sent, scan documents etc		Responsibility			
Allocate to Division		Ministers Office	05/11/2013	04/11/2013	04/11/20
Allocate to Coordinator		Ministerial Liaison Officer	05/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Allocate to Manager		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	05/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Allocate to Author to Draft Response		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	06/11/2013	05/11/2013	
Draft Response		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	06/11/2013	06/11/2013	
Quality Control - Coordinator		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	11/11/2013	06/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Senior / Manager		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	11/11/2013	11/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Director		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	12/11/2013	11/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Executive Director		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	13/11/2013	12/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Organisational Governance		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	14/11/2013	13/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Deputy Director-General		Organisational Governance - Coordin	15/11/2013	14/11/2013	
Request for Approval - Director-General		Deputy Director-General	15/11/2013	15/11/2013	
Dispatch to Minister		Director-General	18/11/2013	15/11/2013	
Quality Control - Ministerial Advisor		Organisational Governance - Coordin	19/11/2013	18/11/2013	
Unsigned brief returned to division		Ministers Office Advisors	20/11/2013	19/11/2013	
Signed FINAL to DLO for Scanning		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	20/11/2013	20/11/2013	
Signed brief returned to division		Ministers Office	21/11/2013	20/11/2013	
Signed Copy Processed within Division		Coordinator - (please assign to appro	22/11/2013	21/11/2013	
		Organisational Governance - Coordin	25/11/2013	22/11/2013	

TRIM closed

Mbonzi, Jackie

From: Winter, Jancye
Sent: Wednesday, 13 November 2013 11:50 AM
To: Mbonzi, Jackie
Subject: FW: M-13-2009 41 correspondence re WIRC
Attachments: M-13- 2099 Tracker correspondence re WIRC.docx; M-13- 2099 Letter 41 correspondence re WIRC.docx

Hi Jackie

Please print out including this email for Nics comments/clearance.

Jancye

From: Bamford, Michelle
Sent: Wednesday, 13 November 2013 11:35 AM
To: Winter, Jancye
Cc: Mbonzi, Jackie
Subject: M-13-2009 41 correspondence re WIRC

Jancye

Please find attached M-13-2009 41 correspondence re WIRC for your clearance.

As discussed with you I have kept this response very brief and not addressing the specifics in the letter – but rather used overarching statements.

It should be noted that 41 has raised her concerns with Mary Porter M-13- 2058 and will she will receive two letters from the Minister:

- One as a service provider M-13 -2097
- One responding to the complaint she lodged with Minister Corbell M-13-2009.

I have not loaded onto TRIM yet.

Cheers Michelle

Michelle Bamford | Senior Policy Officer

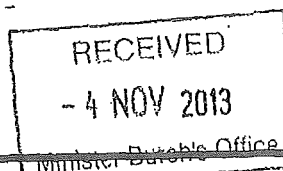
Phone: 6205 0515 | Fax: 6207 0592 | Email: michelle.bamford@act.gov.au

Community Participation Group | Office for Women | Community Services Directorate | ACT Government
Level 4, 11 Moore Street Canberra City | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 | www.act.gov.au



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Gray, John

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

41
Thursday, 31 October 2013 11:22 PM
CORBELL
Concerns for community safety if the closure of Women's Information and Referral Centre goes ahead.

TO *DLO Br response to Ms Corbell*
☐ Chief of Staff
☒ Senior Adviser
☐ Media Adviser
☐ EO
☒ DLO
☐ Minister's Office

PLEASE

☐ Reply
☐ Advise
☐ Noted
☐ File
☐ Arrange meeting
☐ For information
☒ Refer to *Min Burch*
☐ Action

Dear Mr Corbell

I am writing to you about my concerns about the decision of the ACT Minister for Women, Ms Joy Burch, to close the Women's Information and Referral Centre.

COMMENT

As you may be aware the Centre has been operating for 35 years and is used by about 12 500 women each year. It provides a range of free and very low cost services to women in the ACT including telephone, drop in or email access to information and/or referral to appropriate services. Women can use the Centre's free library, access the computers, take a personal development course or join a support group.

WIRC is the only place that offers personal development courses specifically for women on self-esteem, assertiveness and many other topics. It coordinates services with Carers' groups, Indigenous health services and others and works in a myriad of ways to increase the health and well being of women in the ACT.

WIRC also has a critical role to play in supporting and increasing community safety. It is the only place in the ACT where women can access domestic violence support groups, where the focus is on supporting them to move on from the cycle of violence, to increase their self-esteem and to be able to build respectful relationships in their future, thus aiming to prevent the inter-generational transmission of the cycle of family violence.

This is particularly important given the Canberra Times article on Sunday 27 October 2013 which outlined that the ACT Domestic Violence Crisis Service has experienced a 50% increase in demand for its services and is desperately struggling to keep pace with this demand.

The same article also highlighted that the Domestic Violence Crisis Service is calling for more resources for long term follow up programs to assist those experiencing violence to break the cycle of violence. They are unable to provide these programs themselves and it appears that the loss of WIRC will remove the only service providing these critical support programs for women. All of which has the potential to diminish the safety of women and children in the ACT.

I understand that since the introduction of new referral arrangements with the ACT Police WIRC has seen a 30% increase in police referrals. It is unclear whether Minister Burch is aware of this and I am wondering if she has consulted with you in your capacity as Minister for Police and Emergency Services as to the potential impacts of the closure of WIRC and how to manage the same.

In particular I am concerned that the closure of WIRC will reduce the options for referral for ACT Police, it will reduce the options for women and both of these things will lead to increasing cycles of family violence and inter-generational transmission of that violence.

I understand that a recent KPMG review found WIRC to be the service which has the highest reach per capita and which offers the most number of programs of the women's services reviewed. The same report highlighted WIRC as one of the most *cost effective* community information services in Australia.

I am deeply confused and gravely concerned by the Minister's decision and am calling on you as the Minister for a portfolio area that will be very adversely impacted by this decision to take whatever steps are available to seek the reversal of this decision.

I would greatly welcome the opportunity to discuss my concerns with you.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this most important matter.

Yours sincerely

41

To

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| ☐ Minister | ☐ DLO |
| ☐ Chief of Staff | ☐ OM |
| ☐ Senior Advisor | |
| ☐ Media Advisor | |

Please

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Reply | ☐ Arrange Meeting |
| ☐ Advise | ☐ FYI |
| ☐ Noted | ☐ Refer to |
| ☐ File | ☐ Action |
| ☐ Comment | |



Joy Burch MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS
MINISTER FOR WOMEN
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

cy

Dear ... cy

X Thank you for your letter to Minister Corbell dated 31 October 2013, about the changes to information and referral services for women in the ACT. I am responding to you in my capacity as the Minister for Women.

As you know, the Women's Information and Referral Centre (the Centre) has been operating for 35 years from a central location in Canberra. Over that time the city has grown with large numbers of vulnerable women residing in outer suburbs, away from the city centre.

The ACT Government is committed to continuing to provide a quality, accessible information and referral services to women in the ACT. The services and programs previously provided by the Centre will continue to be available to women through an enhanced service delivery model. By decentralising the services currently provided by the Centre it is anticipated that it will improve accessibility for women in our community.

We will continue to engage and consult with key stakeholders about the development of a new service delivery model for the services and programs for women in the ACT.

Thank you again for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women

November 2013

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6205 0020 Fax (02) 6205 0495

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100
CANBERRA

Bamford, Michelle

From: Bamford, Michelle
Sent: Thursday, 14 November 2013 9:30 AM
To: Harris, Marilyn
Subject: RE: M-13-2009 41 correspondence re WIRC

Thank you.

Michelle Bamford | Senior Policy Officer

Phone: 6205 0515 | Fax: 6207 0592 | Email: michelle.bamford@act.gov.au

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From: Harris, Marilyn
Sent: Thursday, 14 November 2013 8:15 AM
To: Bamford, Michelle
Subject: RE: M-13-2009 41 correspondence re WIRC

Done

From: Bamford, Michelle
Sent: Wednesday, 13 November 2013 5:18 PM
To: Harris, Marilyn
Cc: Chester, Tracy; Manikis, Nic; Winter, Jancye
Subject: M-13-2009 41 correspondence re WIRC

Marilyn

Can you please close this TRIM request? The has been responded to in
M-13 -2097 Women's Information and Referral Centre(WIRC) – communication.

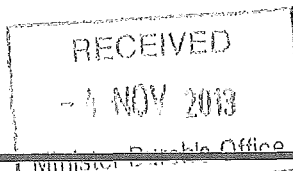
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Michelle Bamford | Senior Policy Officer

Phone: 6205 0515 | Fax: 6207 0592 | Email: michelle.bamford@act.gov.au

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Level 4, 11 Moore Street Canberra City | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 | www.act.gov.au





DLO for response
TO *41*

Gray, John

From: *41*
Sent: Thursday, 31 October 2013 11:22 PM
To: CORBELL
Subject: Concerns for community safety if the closure of Women's Information and Referral Centre goes ahead.

- ☐ Chief of Staff
☒ Senior Adviser ☒ EO
☐ Media Adviser ☒ DLO
☐

PLEASE

- ☐ Reply ☐ Arrange meeting
☐ Advise ☐ For information
☐ Noted ☒ Refer to *Min Burch*
☐ File ☐ Action
☐

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I would greatly welcome the opportunity to discuss my concerns with you.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this most important matter.

Yours sincerely

ca

To

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| ☐ Minister | ☐ DLO |
| ☐ Chief of Staff | ☐ OM |
| ☐ Senior Advisor | |
| ☐ Media Advisor | |

Please

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Reply | ☐ Arrange Meeting |
| ☐ Advise | ☐ FYI |
| ☐ Noted | ☐ Refer to |
| ☐ File | ☐ Action |
| ☐ Comment | |

Bamford, Michelle

From: Bamford, Michelle
Sent: Wednesday, 13 November 2013 11:35 AM
To: Winter, Jancye
Cc: Mbonzi, Jackie
Subject: M-13-2009 41 correspondence re WIRC
Attachments: M-13- 2099 Tracker 41 ; correspondance re WIRC.docx; M-13- 2099 Letter 41 ; correspondance re WIRC.docx

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- One as a service provider M-13 -2097
- One responding to the complaint she lodged with Minister Corbell M-13-2009.

I have not loaded onto TRIM yet.

Cheers Michelle

Michelle Bamford | Senior Policy Officer

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Level 4, 11 Moore Street Canberra City | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 | www.act.gov.au



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Bamford, Michelle

From: Bamford, Michelle
Sent: Wednesday, 13 November 2013 10:18 AM
To: Winter, Jancye
Subject: M-13-2099 41 Correspondence re WIRC

Jancye

I am preparing a response to M-13 -2099. The email from 41 to Minister Corbell makes reference to recent report by KPMG - stating *"to be service which has the highest reach per capita and which offered the number of program of women services reviewed. The same report highlighted WIRC as one of the most cost effective community information services in Australia."*

I cannot find a copy of the report to read to get further information.

Can I discuss this with you really struggling with this one – as this is the third letter this women will receive.

Cheers Michelle

Michelle Bamford | Senior Policy Officer

Phone: 6205 0515 | Fax: 6207 0592 | Email: michelle.bamford@act.gov.au

Community Participation Group | Office for Women | Community Services Directorate | ACT Government

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CM Ministers
(Number if available)

Trim Number
M-13/2116

Ministerial / Correspondence Tracker

Date Due to
Minister's Office
15/11/2013

Date Due to
Director-General
13/11/2013

Date Due to
Organisational
Governance
11/11/2013

Date Due to
Executive Director
N/A

Date Due to
Director
7/11/2013

Subject: Women's Information and Referral Centre (the Centre) - Statistics

WHAT IS REQUIRED

☐ Correspondence ☐ Meeting Brief ☒ Brief ☐ Question on Notice
☐ Media/ Function ☐ Dot points ☐ Other Letter

SIGN OFF FOR RESPONSE

~~Director-General~~

Deputy Director-General

Organisational Governance

Executive Director

Senior Director

Business Unit Name

Senior Manager

Action/Contact Officer

Date

Date 12/11/13

Date 8/11/13

Date

Date 7/11/13

Date

Telephone

CHECK LIST

☐ Original Documentation ☐ Reply ☐ Any attachments

☐ Notify DLO that dot points for Minister Burch / Minister Barr / Minister Rattenbury Speech (Attachment __) Media alert (Attachment __) Media release (Attachment __) need to be provided to Media Advisor via TRIM Notified / / 20 Initials _____

☐ Directorate camera required (book through Outlook calendar at CSD Media Camera)

☐ Directorate banner required (book through Outlook calendar at CSD Media Banner)

☐ Material to be uploaded to CSD Internet (email CSD Webmaster - allow 3 working days)

Organisational Governance use only

☐ CM Function Brief Mailbox (CM Events only)

To be completed by Minister's Office

☐ Satisfactory ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:



ACT

Government

Community Services

Date

7 November 2013

To

Minister for Women

• ~~Director-General~~

• Deputy Director-General

From

Director, Community Participation Group

File

M-13/2116

Subject

Women's Information and Referral Centre (the Centre) - Statistics

Critical Date

STANDARD

Purpose

To provide a breakdown of the data collected on the contact between the public and staff from the Centre, including the participants attending both fee and non-fee courses.

Background/Issues

The Centre was established in 1978 as a shopfront style to provide free information and referral service on a range of issues in a supportive and confidential environment.

Since September 2013, the Community Services Directorate has been implementing a redesign process for the delivery of services traditionally provided by the Centre.

In 2012-13, WIRC responded to 12,375 contacts (a contact is defined as an 'occasion of service'), and provided 12 courses, eight support groups, 19 information sessions and eight workshops on a range of topics.

A list describing the top issues raised by clients, the demographics of the users of services offered by the Centre and a list of courses, support groups, information sessions and workshops is at **Attachment A**.

It would appear that a significant number of clients used the Centre to access publications and other information and educational and training opportunities.

Recommendation

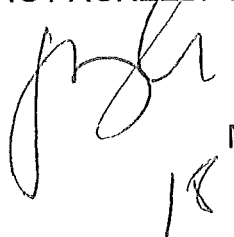
That you:

- **Note** the information in the brief and at **Attachment A** regarding the data collected by the Women's Information and Referral Centre.



Nic Manikis
Director
Community Participation Group

NOTED/ AGREED/ NOT AGREED/ PLEASE DISCUSS



Minister for Women
Joy Burch MLA
November 2013

really shows that we need to do
better with data from here on

Contacts

- In 2012-13, Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) staff responded to 12,375 contacts (occasions of service) are breakdown of the contacts are:
 - Telephone: 5,693;
 - Face to face scheduled appointments: 398;
 - Drop in visits: 1,698;
 - Fax, post, email: 3,477;
 - Library and Internet: 380; and
 - Courses, support groups and/or information session attendees: 729.
- Of the 12,375 contacts:
 - 0.76% identified as men;
 - 6.95% from a culturally and linguistically diverse background;
 - 0.76% from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background;
 - 2.19% identified as being over the age of 55 years;
 - 0.97% identified as having a disability; and
 - 1.34% identified as being under the age of 25 years.
- In 2012-13, 14, 879 client issues/ information were raised. The top ten issues (there are others) raised were:

○ 1,435 (9.64 %) General information; ○ 1,381 (9.28 %) WIRC Support Groups and Information Session; ○ 1,009 (6.78 %) WIRC Courses; ○ 923 (6.2 %) Domestic Violence; ○ 756 (5.08 %) Financial Matters;	○ 751 (5.05%) Legal; ○ 695 (4.67 %) Publications; ○ 685 (4.6 %) Mental Health; ○ 662 (4.45%) Counselling; and ○ 638 (4.29%) Education and Training.
---	---

It would appear that a significant number of people contacting WIRC do so to gain access to general information or educational and training opportunities.

Courses, Support groups, Information sessions and Workshops facilitated by WIRC

- In 2012-13, Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) staff facilitated:
 - 12 courses;
 - eight support groups (five of which were partnerships with ACT community organisations);
 - 19 information sessions; and
 - eight workshops.
- Of the courses, support groups, information sessions and workshops facilitated by WIRC during 2012-13:
 - all support groups and information were free to participants;

- participants paid to attend 11 courses and one course was free to participants; and
- participants paid to attend seven workshops and one workshop was free to participants.

Women that hold a Healthcare Card and/or pension card can apply concession to attend a course facilitated by WIRC.

- The total revenue generated for 2012-13 for courses and workshops facilitated by WIRC was \$12,330 and the expenditure was \$11,287.

The total expenditure does not include WIRC staffing costs to plan and administer the courses and workshops.

	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	TOTAL
OCCASIONS OF SERVICE													
FEMALE													
Phone	377	405	380	378	406	267	351	525	428	346	550	350	4763
Face to Face Appointment	39	30	26	29	28	14	16	37	22	16	35	18	310
Face to Face Drop in visit	110	150	134	131	116	91	120	161	143	107	154	111	1528
Email	222	176	195	210	210	62	158	234	200	186	284	171	2308
Fax	1	1	51	2	1	2	2	2	4	0	0	3	69
Post	30	21	31	20	19	25	24	22	17	14	32	16	271
Library	10	8	5	4	3	4	6	2	7	15	11	3	78
Internet	19	25	33	27	12	10	21	47	47	33	18	7	299
SERVICE PROVIDERS													
Phone	76	69	76	85	114	59	83	96	63	62	86	60	929
Face to Face Appointment	2	7	6	8	1	5	7	9	11	9	7	7	79
Face to Face Drop in visit	5	13	27	15	16	4	6	16	11	9	3	7	132
Email	47	45	40	80	104	64	74	68	66	48	75	50	761
Fax	1	4	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	10
Post	39	1	2	3	9	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	59
Library	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Internet	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
MALE													
Phone	6	4	4	6	3	5	3	5	1	2	6	3	48
Face to Face Appointment	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	9
Face to Face Drop in visit	2	2	5	7	1	5	1	3	3	2	2	4	37
Email	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fax	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Post	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Library	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Internet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL													
PHONE													5,693
FACE TO FACE APPOINTMENT													398
FACE TO FACE DROP IN VISIT													1698
EMAIL													3,068
FAX													79
POST													330
LIBRARY													78
INTERNET													302
SUPPORT GROUPS, COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS			158			127			171			273	729

TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASSIONS OF SERVICES 2012-13

12,375

CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS														%	
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people	44	62	83	73	63		36	74	111	64	46	116	95	867	6.95
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	7	12	9	6	5		3	8	12	16	3	11	4	96	0.76
Ageing- over 55 yrs old	15	29	29	30	15		12	17	25	35	10	37	20	274	2.19
People with a disability	11	10	8	12	14		10	7	11	12	10	9	7	121	0.97
Youth - under 25 yrs old	9	15	12	15	8		7	11	18	9	5	31	28	168	1.34
ISSUES/INFORMATION														%	
Accommodation	33	38	30	39	32		25	23	35	38	25	31	31	380	2.55
Ageing	10	20	12	11	15		7	12	10	16	14	5	5	137	0.92
Counselling	53	56	58	59	63		33	48	60	58	60	59	55	662	4.45
Courses and Support Groups	29	49	31	49	59		31	47	53	31	41	49	30	499	3.35
Disability	9	14	9	17	10		14	16	18	18	13	13	6	157	1.06
Domestic Violence	56	75	87	62	73		54	71	93	84	84	99	85	923	6.2
Drug & Alcohol	28	23	35	34	30		18	18	39	35	34	39	25	358	2.41
Education and Training	48	71	52	52	55		37	66	63	37	47	66	44	638	4.29
Financial Matters	48	72	74	59	63		35	62	80	67	68	70	58	756	5.08
General Information	128	105	107	97	142		89	89	162	163	115	144	94	1435	9.64
Health - General	21	31	20	36	25		27	9	20	13	27	35	31	295	1.98
Human Rights/Workplace	6	7	5	11	11		5	7	7	10	8	9	10	96	0.65
Indigenous	3	6	8	3	9		4	11	5	9	6	8	5	77	0.52
Legal	58	60	73	68	71		41	47	82	66	53	63	69	751	5.05
Loss and Grief	19	25	22	18	17		5	11	17	23	12	21	12	202	1.36
Men's	2	5	2	10	4		3	10	2	2	4	1	6	51	0.34
Mental Health	46	61	58	68	67		32	39	57	64	60	74	59	685	4.6
Migrant	23	40	40	29	36		20	28	49	34	25	42	26	392	2.63
Parenting	28	28	28	37	48		27	26	39	27	17	40	24	369	2.48
Publications	70	67	51	69	78		57	79	64	33	28	56	43	695	4.67
Problem Gambling	3	6	4	3	5		2	6	1	7	2	5	1	45	0.3
Recreation/Leisure	3	5	7	8	4		6	3	7	5	2	6	2	58	0.39
Relationship Issues	41	54	50	48	59		21	37	66	56	52	48	37	569	3.82
Return to Work Grants	41	46	54	46	38		34	46	50	38	21	45	31	490	3.29
Separation	41	45	42	42	50		27	36	48	44	36	45	47	503	3.38
Sexual/Ritual Abuse	2	4	6	13	3		4	2	3	5	3	9	1	55	0.37
Suicide	6	8	5	10	5		3	3	2	5	3	5	4	59	0.4
Un/Employment	30	57	49	35	42		36	39	51	33	35	55	42	504	3.39
WIRC courses	60	91	130	116	51		33	109	95	81	69	94	80	1009	6.78
WIRC support groups and information sessions	167	87	133	156	115		42	70	141	95	92	171	112	1381	9.28
Women's Health	21	45	32	58	47		20	42	41	47	39	47	44	483	3.25
Youth	14	12	5	14	11		11	17	23	14	10	22	12	165	1.11
NUMBER OF CLIENT ISSUES/INFORMATION RAISED	1147	1313	1319	1377	1338		803	1129	1483	1258	1105	1476	1131		
TOTAL NUMBER OF OF CLIENT ISSUES/INFORMATION RAISED - 2012-13														14879	

FIRST QUARTER						
SUPPORT GROUPS, COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS	ENROLMENTS	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	FEES	NO FEES	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	
COURSES						
Seven Types of Busy	19	4	X		17	
Self Esteem and Assertiveness	9	6	X		8	
SUPPORT GROUPS						
Domestic Violence Support Group	10	8		X	6	
INFORMATION SESSIONS						
Family Law Information Session - Women's Legal Centre	12	1		X	6	
Thinking Thursday - Presentation Skills	33	1		X	33	
Thinking Thursday - Presentation Skills - Repeat	33	1		X	33	
Thinking Thursday - Listening for Strength	33	1		X	33	
Taming your Finances - CARE	12	1		X	10	
WORKSHOPS						
Communication Skills and Rapport	12	1	X		12	
					146	

SECOND QUARTER						
SUPPORT GROUPS, COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS	ENROLMENTS	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	FEES	NO FEES	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	
COURSES						
Your Self Worth and Wellbeing	11	4	X		10	
Financial Empowerment	7	2	X		5	
Self Esteem After Domestic Violence	16	6			15	
Moving On After Separation	16	8		X	12	
INFORMATION SESSIONS						
Thinking Thursday - The Happiness Experiment	35	1		X	33	
Thinking Thursday - Effective Ways of Dealing with Change	35	1		X	33	
Return to Work - Career Information Sessions	14	4		X	11	
WORKSHOPS						
Negotiating Skills for the Workplace	8	1	X		8	
					127	

THRID QUARTER						
SUPPORT GROUPS, SESSIONS	COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION	ENROLMENTS	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	FEES	NO FEES	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
COURSES						
Emotional Mastery		15	5	X		13
Assertiveness and Conflict Management - After separation		6	6	X		6
SUPPORT GROUPS						
It is Time to Talk - Domestic Violence Support Group		12	8		X	9
INFORMATION SESSIONS						
Thinking Thursday - Getting Organised-Back in Control		38	1		X	33
Thinking Thursday - The Benefits of Mentoring		35	1		X	35
Relationship Separation Legal Session - Womens's Legal Centre		12	1		X	8
Financial Friday		10	1		X	8
Careeer Information Sessions - Return to Work		24	4		X	15
WORKSHOPS						
The Five Secrets of Self Confidence		17	1	X		17
Improving your Relationships for Life		14	1	X		11
Public Speaking for Women		16	1	X		16
						171

FOURTH QUARTER						
SUPPORT GROUPS, COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS	ENROLMENTS	NUMBER OF SESSIONS	FEE\$	NO FEES	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	
COURSES						
Managing Change	10	2	X		8	
Healthy Relationships	10	4	X		7	
Healthy Relationships 2	9	3	X		6	
Self Esteem and Assertiveness		6	X		6	
SUPPORT GROUPS						
Self Esteem and Assertiveness for Carers ACT		6		X	6	
Self Esteem and Assertiveness Gunyah Partnership		6		X	10	
Self Esteem and Assertiveness for Carers		2		X	8	
It is Time to talk - Domestic Violence Group	11	8		X	7	
Domestic Violence Partnership Gunyah	15	8		X	15	
Domestic Violence Partnership NorthSide Community Services	15	3		X	15	
INFORMATION SESSIONS						
Thinking Thursday- Interactive Presentations	33	1		X	33	
Thinking Thursday - Building Resilience in the workplace	35	1		X	33	
Thinking Thursday - Building resilience in the workplace - repeat	30	1		X	28	
Thinking Thursday - Overcoming Procrastination	33	1		X	30	
Relationship Separation - Women's Legal Centre	10	1		X	10	
Financial Independence	12	1		X	12	
WORKSHOPS						
The Five Secrets of Self Confidence	8	1	X		7	
At Home Business Seminar with Lighthouse	20	1	X	X	19	
Negotiating with Emotional Intelligence	15	1	X		13	
					253	



ACT
Government

Community Services

M-13/2216

Date 22 November 2013

To Chief Minister
Minister for Women
▪ Deputy Director-General *22/11/13*
▪ Executive Director Policy and Organisational Services

CC Minister for Women

From Director Community Participation Group

Subject Meeting with Representatives from the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL)

Critical Date

HIGH PRIORITY

You have agreed to meet with representatives from WEL (Rhian Williams and Ms Emma Davidson, WEL National Secretary) on Monday, 25 November 2013.

Sensitivities

TheWEL representatives intend to raise with you their concerns about the closure of the office accommodating the Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) at London Circuit. You should emphasise that while the WIRC office is being closed, the previously provided services and programs are not being closed and will continue to be offered. A number will be outreached into other appropriate community facilities in the regional areas of Canberra. The 'What's on for Women Calendar January – June 2014' being prepared by CSD will be released at the regular time in January 2014.

Purpose

To provide you with background information to assist with your meeting with WEL representatives on 25 November.

Background/Issues

The WEL has alleged that the ACT Government is executing a broad agenda for dispensing with specific women's services.

WEL is a feminist political organisation founded in 1972. It is a non party political and non sectarian women's lobby. In that same year, members of Canberra Women's Liberation organised the first meeting of WEL in the ACT.

The WIRC was established in 1978 as a CBD shopfront to provide information on women's agenda issues.

Since September 2013, the Community Services Directorate (CSD) has been exploring a new service model for the previously provided services and programs. To date the process has included:

- public announcement that the WIRC shopfront service delivery model will change by the end of 2013 with services and programs continued to be delivered in other ways;
- consultation with WIRC staff and provision of supports for changes to their roles in CSD;
- consultation with key stakeholders to identify actions for shaping and transitioning a new service delivery model; and
- long term gender responsive service design and delivery.

The ACT Government is committed to improving women's services. These changes are about improving outreach so that women across the ACT have better access to programs and services. The changes are also designed to reduce duplication in the provision of services.

The ACT Government continues to work with a range of women's community sector organisations around what the new women's service model will look like. Space is already being made available at the *Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre* to ensure a city presence for women's services is maintained. Other options for additional locations in the city are being explored. The *Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre* space will be more secure than

the previous WiRC location. It accommodates many community groups such as the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Inc and will also accommodate the ACT Office for Women before the end of 2013.

Wide ranging discussions have been undertaken with stakeholders and relevant service providers since September 2013. For example:

- two meetings (18 and 25 October 2013) of representatives from the local women's sector have been conducted inviting proposals for a new service model. While no formal proposal has been received I am advised that representatives have had subsequent discussions led by ACTCOSS to identify a new service delivery/advocacy model. This will be further explored in the next week.
- discussions with representatives from the Citizens Advice Bureau have been conducted with a view to that organisation coordinating the *Jul-Dec 2014 Whats On for Women* publication and potential for providing a safe drop-in space at the Bureau's offices on the ground floor of the Griffin Centre;
- discussions have also occurred within CSD about the suitability of the Child and Family Centres and the Gateway in ACT Housing (NDH Belconnen) becoming sites for the provision of information and advice to vulnerable women and to also serve as drop-in locations. These discussions are continuing and may involve a change in the way these facilities do business with clients.

Next Steps

Over the next two weeks consultations with representatives of the local women's sector will be continuing on a one-on-one basis as well as collectively. These consultations will be undertaken by Ms Bridie Doyle (Project Officer) and supported by Ms Veronica Wensing (Manager Office for Women).

A new service model taking into account the views of stakeholders will be finalised by mid December 2013.

In the meantime, work to adapt the *Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre* as a hub for women services and drop-in is nearing completion.

While planning is proceeding for the relocation from the existing WiRC office to the *Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre* to occur from 16 to 19 December 2013, other sites are also being prepared to take up services and programs from mid December 2013.

Consultation

Stakeholders are being consulted and asked to provide their views on a new service model.

Recommendation

That you:

- **note** the information in this brief including **Attachment A**

Nic Manikis
Director
Community Participation Group

AGREED/ NOT AGREED/ PLEASE DISCUSS

Katy Gallagher MLA
Chief Minister
November 2013



ACT
Government

Community Services

m-13/2314

Date

5 December 2013

To

Minister for Women

- Director-General
- Deputy Director-General
- Executive Director Policy and Organisational Services

From

Director Community Participation Group

File no

Subject

Position paper on Women's Information and Referral Centre

Critical Date

- HIGH PRIORITY

The Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) will cease operating from its current City shopfront on 13 December 2013.

Sensitivities

The relocation and reform of the services provided by Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) has attracted negative community comment and media. There has been some suggestion within the women's sector to hold a protest but this has failed to materialise. The actual closure of the London Circuit office may provide such an opportunity and/or attract media attention.

Your Ministerial Advisory Council on Women has raised some concern around the communication of the changes to date.

Purpose

To seek your approval of a position paper outlining the changes and the proposed new model of service delivery which will be available to the public.

Background/Issues

WIRC was established in 1978 as an information and referral service for women which included a city based shopfront.

Since September 2013, the Community Services Directorate has been implementing a redesign process for the delivery of the services traditionally provided by WIRC. This redesign was driven by a need to review an old service

model and approach as well as the financial viability and need for a separate commercially leased shopfront.

Most of the services or functions previously provided by WIRC will continue, however they will now be contained within the Community Participation Group alongside other related service and policy areas of CSD.

The new model refocuses the service on the provision of information and referral, improvement of accessibility for women from marginalised groups and in providing services in an outreach capacity where possible.

The majority of functions will be relocated to the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, including the phone/email information and referral function which accounts for 74% of the current work undertaken by WIRC.

The domestic violence support group functions will be relocated to the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre until 30 June 2014 and then outsourced to an expert community provider from 1 July 2014.

There has been some negative social and media commentary about the relocation and the closure of the WIRC shopfront, particularly in relation to the data and evidence used to justify the changes. A copy of a position paper outlining the rationale for change and the new delivery modes is at Attachment A for your approval.

It is proposed that this paper be available to the public on the CSD internet.

Media Issues

There has been some previous negative media about the changes to WIRC. The physical closure of the city Shopfront on 13 December 2013 may attract attention.

Consultation

Collective and bilateral consultation has been undertaken about the changes and the service model with a range of women's forums. Information about past and future consultations is included in the Position Paper.

Financial Implications

The savings from the remodelling of the WIRC functions are:

- a) 2013-14 \$152,142 and
- b) 2014-15 \$196,528.

Recommendation

That you:

- Agree to the public release of the Position Paper at Attachment A; and
- Note the information in the brief.



Nic Manikis
Director
Community Participation Group

NOTED/ AGREED/ NOT AGREED/ PLEASE DISCUSS

December 2013
Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women



ACT
Government
Community Services

WIRC SERVICES POSITION PAPER

DECEMBER 2013

1. Introduction

2. Background
3. Model
4. Future evaluation and reform

5. Table of current and future service provision
6. Consultation and research

1 INTRODUCTION

The ACT Government is committed to addressing gender equality issues by funding a range of women specific services and by ensuring mainstream services offer appropriate gender based service responses which are accessible to everyone in the community including those people in the community who are most disadvantaged.

The ACT Government remains committed to ensuring that an information and referral service for women will continue but the location from which this is delivered and for some functions the actual provider will change.

The Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC) has been a valued government service for women in the ACT for 35 years and in that time the services offered have evolved in response to demand but the approach to engaging women in the community has remained largely the same. It is reasonable then that this 35 year old approach be re-evaluated taking into account the significant changes to technology, population groups, service delivery models and the geographical layout of Canberra that have occurred in that period.

There are a range of imperatives for making changes to the current WIRC service delivery model. Firstly it is critical that governments ensure their services are delivered in ways that are appropriate to and accessible by those people in the community most in need. Secondly, as the ACT Government has made clear, in the current fiscal environment there is a need to stamp out duplication and deliver services in a more efficient way while minimising the impact on service delivery. Thirdly, it is critical that with the recent reforms of a range of Community Services Directorate (CSD) and other ACT Government services, that all related services are aligned and consistent in their service delivery approach and that they are informed by and operate to and within broader Government policy.

Recent internal CSD changes resulting in the creation of the Community Participation Group provides a timely context for re-evaluating WIRC services and ensuring they align with the policy imperatives of CSD and the ACT Government as a whole.

The reformed model retains those WIRC functions that are appropriate for the ACT Government to provide and the outsourcing of those that are not.

2. BACKGROUND

CSD has been reforming its frontline service delivery for many years to ensure services are efficient, are targeted to those in the community most in need and are provided in ways that minimise multiple sites of contact and wherever possible reduce the need to physically attend those sites. This has included the implementation of the Central Access Point (CAP) in Housing ACT, the development of the Child and Family Gateway Service and a range of initiatives to create an integrated service system of support across and between the various areas of CSD and community sector services.

More recently Minister Barr announced the ACT Government will develop a Human Services Blueprint in partnership with the community sector to 'make Canberra's human services system more integrated and cohesive'. While the Blueprint will understandably initially focus on CSD, as the main provider of human services in the ACT, consideration will also be given to the linkages between CSD services and other areas such as health, justice and education.

The draft guiding principles of the Blueprint such as person-centred, outcome focussed, sustainable, flexible and tailored have informed the changes outlined in this paper.

The (WIRC) model was established some 35 years ago to provide information and referral services to women in the ACT community. The service was created at a particular time in history that acknowledged, through the provision of resources, the need for specific services for women, particularly for women escaping domestic violence.

35 years on, there is a need to re-evaluate that model in relation to: whether women still access and need a women only physical location for information and referral; how the changes to the geography and demography of Canberra (away from the City as the only and central hub) are reflected in the model; how the services has adapted to the significant technological changes in that period; the current commitment to targeting of resources to people most in need; and the need to reduce, wherever possible, duplication in services.

WIRC is currently geographically located in the City, in an area that accommodates government offices and more recently a sizeable student population. While the city was, 35 years ago the only central hub for the ACT, there are now five 'hubs' in the ACT. Combined with the fact that 74% of services offered by WIRC are not provided face to face, it is appropriate to question the ongoing costs of maintaining an isolated commercial lease in the city. It is also appropriate to question how the needs of women living closer to the other four hubs in the ACT could better access WIRC services and what synergies could be established with other CSD funded services in those locations.

While WIRC data shows that the provision of current WIRC services is well received by the women who access the service, the services offered are not in the main, accessed by young women, older women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women or women from diverse cultural backgrounds. In a more constrained fiscal environment it is critical

that consideration be given, and changes made, to ensure government funded services are targeted at, and accessible to, those people in the community who are most disadvantaged and for whom assistance the assistance provided by a government information and referral service is of significant importance.

NOTE

The Return to Work Grants Program is not a WIRC service. It is a service of the ACT Government Office for Women where the staff member operated primarily from the WIRC site. However the program has been moving to an outreach based service model and staff report this has seen a wider and more disadvantaged group of women accessing this service. This will continue as a function of the Office for Women in the Community Participation Group which is moving to Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre and will continue to expand and explore the outreach model.

Therefore no changes or reference is made to this service other than as an example of outreach successfully improving accessibility.

3. MODEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Information and referral phone line/email

WIRC data (2012-2013) shows that of the total 12,470 contacts with clients, nearly half or 5,787 were via telephone, 3,068 were via email and 330 via post.

Therefore 74% of the services currently provided by WIRC are not provided face to face and are consistent with the core functions of government information and referral service designed to assist women to access the full range of government and community services, from childcare rebates to support groups.

That the provision of information and referral has remained as the core function of WIRC is also reflected in the data on what type of information women sought from WIRC with the highest areas being: WIRC support groups/information sessions (20%), general information (10%) and financial or legal information (10%).

Of the four other States with services similar to WIRC, only one is outsourced to a community provider. The other three services have been retained within government in recognition of the government's role in ensuring accessibility for women to the full range of government and community services.

A review of women's information and referral services conducted by WA in 2013 noted that no "distinct advantages for clients were observed",¹ in relation to whether the services are provided by a Non-Government Organisation or by Government. The Report did however note that the visibility of the service as a distinct service (where it was located with a range of other related government access services), was critical to success.

Therefore the provision of a distinct women's information and referral service will be retained within ACT Government and located with the Community Participation Group within CSD with attention paid to ensuring it remains visible as a distinct service.

Key point 1. The information and referral functions previously delivered by WIRC will be retained within ACT Government facilities and anchored in the Community Participation Group of CSD at Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre.

Domestic violence Support groups

In 2012-2013 WIRC organised five support groups for women who have experienced domestic violence. Three of the groups were run at the WIRC site in the city, one at the Gunyah Indigenous women's service and one through Northside Community services. All five were facilitated by one of a number of women psychologists who have been providing the service to WIRC for some years. The groups varied from three to eight weekly sessions of three hours.

¹ Western Australia Government, *Community Information Evaluation Final Report*, Western Australia, 2013, p.14.

Between 2000 and 2006, the provision of the support groups was tendered to the community sector. However, a review in 2006 found this outsourcing was not successful because of the lack of provider expertise on domestic violence. Consequently, this function was brought back into WIRC.

Consultation undertaken around changes to WIRC, with the primary direct support providers, rather than advocacy based groups, shows support for the need to remodel existing WIRC services, particularly in relation to the domestic violence support groups. Most see an expert community agency such as the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) as the natural provider of this in the ACT.

In addition, many of the women attending the WIRC support groups were actually referred to WIRC by DVCS and/or were current or previous DVCS clients. This not only reflects the key expert role of DVCS it also suggests a duplication or additional set of referral processes for the women accessing the WIRC support groups.

Bilateral consultations with the direct providers also shows strong support for a move to a more flexible and outreach based approach to the provision of the support groups to enhance access by women in the community most in need, including young women, Indigenous women and women from diverse cultural backgrounds. Suggestions included developing a rotating location and target group focus that could include groups specifically for women currently in domestic violence homelessness services provided at one of the refuges and groups at locations such as Winnunga Nimmityjah or a youth centre.

The women's services' providers also made comment that the geographic location of the groups should be expanded to meet the needs of services and women who do not find the city accessible. CSD has a number of locations that could be utilised for these support groups such as the Child and Family Centres which would enhance the provision of these services in a range of locations such as Tuggeranong and Gunghalin.

Providers also recommended re-evaluating the content and model of the support groups as they felt the same thing had been provided for many years now. A full consultative evaluation should occur prior to 30 June 2013, undertaken through a separate contract.

Key point 2. That WIRC funds currently allocated to the provision of domestic violence support groups be transferred to a community agency expert in domestic violence from 1 July 2014. This will include a requirement to locate the groups in a variety of locations and settings, such as at one of the refuges (for current and/or previous clients of the domestic violence homelessness services), Winnunga Nimmityjah and the Child and Family Centres.

Key point 3. A full evaluation of the content, delivery and model of all domestic violence related support groups will be included as a separate deliverable (and separate funding) in the support group contract noted at Key point 3. This evaluation is to be completed prior to 30 June 2014 and the evaluation will also consider and make recommendations on the variety of locations that could be utilised to enhance accessibility.

Other courses

WIRC provides a range of courses including 'self esteem after domestic violence', general 'self esteem', 'moving on after separation' and 'healthy relationships'. WIRC staff report that most attendees at these courses are women who have experienced domestic violence in the past but are no longer at the early or crisis stage of the recovery process. These courses are run either with four to six sessions of three hours. In 2012-2013 they were run 10-12 times with an average of six participants in each course.

The data indicates there is some level of demand for post crisis support groups for women who have experienced domestic violence. However while a large numbers of attendees is not desirable for a support group (rather than for an information based group or course), six attendees is low and suggests these courses could be run less often with more participants in each course.

While it is not strictly necessary to have the same provider run these courses as for the domestic violence support groups, there is merit in doing so. Having one provider coordinating the groups and courses contributes to easier accessibility and a more integrated programmatic approach to content, model and topics.

However, consultation with the women's services sector strongly suggests there is a need to review what courses are provided. It is recommended that the evaluation of the support groups (noted above), include a review of all the domestic violence related courses. This evaluation should be done through a select tender process to ensure an appropriate provider experienced in the provision of women's services and/or support groups.

Key point 4. The provision of the current WIRC courses related to post crisis domestic violence support be included in the evaluation noted at Key point 4.

Information sessions

The current information session on finances and legal issues are relatively well attended. However, WIRC staff report that most attendees are women who have experienced domestic violence. Rather than women who have experienced domestic violence having to attend separate sessions (and address childcare and transport issues for each one), it seems logical that financial and legal information be included in the domestic violence support groups (where the provider can bring in appropriate expertise such as Women's Legal Service), particularly as the providers of the current legal and financial information also conduct separate information sessions as part of their own service provision.

Additionally, having one contract with one provider, rather than outsourcing a number of small contracts goes some way to addressing the issues raised in consultations that the gender based focus of WIRC will be lost if there is a 'piecemeal' approach to remodelling the services.

This can be revisited if the evaluation of the support groups proposes an alternative approach.

Key point 5. The provision of legal and financial information sessions will be included in the domestic violence support groups.

While attendance at the 'Thinking Thursday' sessions provided by WIRC have shown reasonably good attendance, WIRC staff report that they are overwhelmingly attended by public servants. While this indicates demand, with an average of thirty-three attendees at each session, the client group is not a target group for CSD. It is therefore recommended that these sessions be discontinued and be forwarded to CMTD for consideration as part of their 'supporting our staff' commitments.

Key Point 6. The Thinking Thursday sessions will cease and the information on the demand for the Thinking Thursday sessions will be passed to CMTD for consideration.

Face to Face service provision

In 2012-2013 WIRC had 2,476 face to face contacts, with 1,697 of these occurring as 'drop ins', 380 accessing the library or internet and 399 attending a booked appointment.

Across all forms of WIRC service delivery, approximately 35% of contacts are for information about WIRC courses or 'general' information and another 10% for referral or information on legal or financial services. Only 6% of all contacts relate to requests for information or support about domestic violence.

Therefore only approximately 24 women a year access face to face services for support related to domestic violence. This number indicates low usage of WIRC as a place to disclose abuse as would be expected and appropriate to a generalist information and referral service.

While some of the women's sector have raised the importance of WIRC as a 'safe space' for women, particularly in relation to domestic violence, it is important to note that WIRC is an information and referral service, staffed by public servants. It is neither a counselling service, nor a specialist domestic violence service and does not offer direct access to professional or qualified counsellors or the systems and structures that support staff in a specialist service.

It is important also to consider whether a stand-alone and isolated service location is imperative to the provision of good information and referral services for women. The United Kingdom advisory group The Women's National Commission, conducted an online survey in 2010 to explore whether women only services are seen by service users and service providers as critical to good service delivery for women. The survey found that in relation to sexual assault or domestic violence, women only services were seen as critically important.

However for generalist services, the survey found strong support for the provision of 'single-sex services within mixed-service organisations'. A range of reasons were cited including, that 'this sends a clear message that women's issues are not seen as marginal', that 'it is the service user experience and how a service is delivered that matters' 'and that women's services in mixed organisation could change the ethos of the organisation as a whole'.²

It is appropriate that WIRC as a generalist information and referral service be relocated to the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, not only as this saves on commercial leasing costs, but because it integrates the service with similar services in ACT Government

² Women's National Commission (2010), *Findings from the WNC survey on women only services*. UK. p.2.

rather than isolated from the natural integrations and policy contexts that inform and support service provision (including the Human Services Blueprint).

However it is important that WIRC staff are trained and understand how to deal with disclosures and refer women to the appropriate expert services and that the service creates an atmosphere that is welcoming, safe and discreet with private spaces easily created or available if required.

Key point 7. A designated, private and safe space for women to access WIRC services will be provided in the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre.

To increase the accessibility of WIRC services in locations other than the city, it could be possible to create a number of identifiable 'outreach' locations in existing CSD sites where the face to face responses to information requests could be provided by identified existing CSD staff. This model would see the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre as the primary or central hub, with the three Child and Family Centres (CFCs) and the Housing ACT Central Access Point (CAP) as identified outreach sites. This would result in WIRC information and support being provided in Tuggeranong, Gunghalin, Belconnen and the city.

This model operates in South Australia where the Women's Information Service (WIS) has a central hub in the Adelaide CBD but has satellite functions at rural and other locations. While "WIS staff are not available at these locations" women can access information at those sites and there is a free telephone contact to the service in Adelaide.

Locating the anchor hub in Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre with the Community Participation Group provides an opportunity to enhance access for women (particularly women from culturally diverse backgrounds) as well as ensuring a more streamlined and consistent approach to service delivery within CSD. Increasing outreach services at the Housing Central Access Point provides an opportunity to enhance access by a more disadvantaged group of women than currently reflected in the WIRC data and services at the CFCs improves accessibility for women residing in a wide variety of geographical locations.

As the primary requests for information received by WIRC are about WIRC support groups, general information and legal/financial information and referral it should not be difficult to identify and train specific and appropriate CSD staff to be able to respond at these locations.

Key Point 8. Consideration be given to creating outreach sites in the three Child and Family Services and the Housing Central Access Point. The outreach sites could have signage and information stands and specific workers (existing HACT and CFC staff) trained and able to respond to the requests for information.

Key point 9. The Internet/ computer services will be relocated to the Theo Notaras Centre.

The current library facilities at WIRC were accessed by only 78 women in 2012-2013. While space could be found in the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre usage of these resources could be improved through their placement in another location. Preliminary discussions are underway with the Civic Library regarding the possibility of establishing a feminist or women's section with the donated books from the WIRC library which could significantly increase the current low usage of this resource. This is also consistent with the ACT Women's Plan. Any other suggestions from the women's sector should also be considered.

As the name WIRC currently contains the word "centre" and the remodelling changes the notion of place based services, the use of the word "centre" could be misleading. It is recommended that the name be changed to either 'Women's information', Women's Information and Referral Network or the Women's Information Network. This could be determined into the future in consultation with the women's sector. Due to the time constraints on printing the calendar for instance, the interim name used will be 'Women's Information'.

Key point 10. Consultation with the sector will occur to determine a new name to be phased in across publications and documents over a 12 month period.

In most other jurisdictions in Australia, information services for women, similar to WIRC have a strong online presence. For example Women's Infolink in Queensland provided by the Queensland Government through their Office for Women provides a "Find a service" facility on line to search in a variety of categories for local relevant services and a range of fact sheets and other publications available on line.

In order to increase access and adapt to new platforms it is recommended that CSD and in particular the Community Participation Group improve the current accessibility of on-line information for women over the next 12 months.

Key point 11.- CSD will explore improvements to the current provision of on-line information for women over the next 12 months.

The NSW Government has developed and made available the "Aurora" phone application for women experiencing domestic violence or who are worried about their relationship. The app allows women to message trusted friends and or the police in situations where they have concerns for their safety and the app contains useful and critical information on services and supports that are available. The app has been designed with a range of safety features and is available for free download. This app provides a new platform to support women in situations of domestic violence and could be seen to have particular application for young women and across Australia and in the ACT a very significant proportion of women experiencing domestic violence are young women.

Key point 12. The Office for Women will investigate the development/purchase of an ACT specific phone app (like the 'Aurora' for women experiencing domestic violence.

4. FUTURE EVALUATION AND REFORM

It is important that robust data be collected and evaluated as to the success of the relocation of WIRC and the intention to improve access to the services provided by disadvantaged groups of women in the ACT. A data committee will be established within the Community Participation Group to develop robust data collection and analysis tools.

The success of any service delivery in government depends on the integration of policy and practice. That WIRC services will now be located with the Community Participation Group in the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre allows for the development of stronger links between the policy and practice arms of the Office for Women. To this end it is appropriate to review and evaluate the revised model of delivery of WIRC functions in line with the ACT Women's Plan.

While the ACT Women's plan continues to June/July 2015, the current implementation plan ends in September 2014. This provides a perfect opportunity to ensure consistency between service delivery and policy. The data committee will look at current data collection and potential additions or changes to this collection with a final data plan by end February 2014. This then allows for 6 months data collection and a period for revisions to be completed and amended in line with the next Women's Implementation plan on 1 October 2015.

During the 6 month period from February 2014 to September 2014, consultation will also occur with a range of women's sector forums about any issues arising from the reformed model of service delivery that can then also be considered in relation to the new Implementation plan.

Input into the Implementation plan for the ACT Women's Plan must include consideration of WIRC functions and services within the broader policy context of CSD and the ACT Government more broadly, particularly Health and Education and with particular focus on improving access by the most disadvantaged women in the ACT community.

A full evaluation of the reformed model of service delivery should occur in preparation of the new ACT Women's Plan in June/July 2015. The parameters, deliverables and timeframe of this evaluation will be determined and managed by the Office for Women in consultation with the women's sector.

5. RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

2a Research

Other jurisdictions

A number of State and Territory governments in Australia provide some form of 'free and confidential information and referral service about government agencies and community services supporting women' (Queensland Government).

Of the four jurisdictions with identified women's information services, South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia, three provide the service within government and one, Victoria is community based. Two of the four, Victoria and South Australia, offer a shopfront facility.

South Australia also operates 'satellite' services in regional locations. These locations (in other government shopfronts, provide a range of written information and a free phone service to the Adelaide centre.

Only the Victorian service, provided by a community based organisation, offers a range of services other than information and referral such as programs, classes and professional development.

WIRC DATA (2012-2013)

WIRC data (2012-2013) shows that of the total 12,470 contacts with clients, nearly half or 5,787 were via telephone, 3,068 were via email and 330 via post. Therefore 74% of the services currently provided by WIRC are not provided face to face.

Of the 2,476 face to face contacts, 1,697 'dropped in' to the service, 380 clients accessed the WIRC library or the internet services provided and 399 attended a booked appointment.

Across both the non face to face and face to face services, the four most common areas of information sought were:

- Information on WIRC support groups/information sessions (20%)
- General information (10%)
- Financial or legal information (10%)
- Domestic violence (6%)

Support groups/information sessions

A range of support groups for women are facilitated by WIRC, including domestic violence support groups, self esteem based courses and legal or financial information sessions.

In 2012-2013, there were 52 attendees at the five domestic violence support groups offered (each running for between three to eight sessions).

Across a range of other courses targeting women's self esteem and relationships (including self esteem post separation, healthy relationships and self confidence courses) there was a total of approximately 130 attendees in 2012-2013. Data does not reveal whether the women attending the domestic violence support groups are also attending the self esteem based courses, although WIRC staff report that many of the self esteem based courses are attended by women who have experienced domestic violence in the past (where the support groups are attended by women who have recently experienced domestic violence).

Other groups and information sessions

While data shows high attendance with an average of 33 attendees, at the "Thinking Thursday sessions", (with topics such as: 'Dealing with change', 'mentoring', 'Getting organised', 'Building resilience in the workplace', 'presentation skills'), consultation with WIRC staff indicates these are attended predominantly by public servants, both Commonwealth and ACT. While this indicates an area of demand by women in the community, it is legitimate to question whether CSD as the provider of targeted human services is the appropriate provider of these. This interest has been referred to the relevant area of Chief Ministers and Treasury Directorate for consideration.

The courses/information sessions on financial matters showed relatively good attendance with 35 women attending four sessions. While a breakdown of the details of the attendees is not available, these courses appear relevant to CSD targeted service provision in that women as a group disproportionately experience poverty (particularly single mothers), and women escaping domestic violence often need support to regain control of finances, given financial control is a common component of domestic violence.

The same reasoning could be applied to the legal information sessions provided, with 24 attendees at the three information sessions offered in 2012-2013.

2b Consultation

Early consultation occurred with the Chair of the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Inc, former Chair of the National Prevention of Violence Against Women Council, Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Council for Women and Women's Centre for Health Matters. All reported that they understood the need to modernise and change the current model of service provision and agreed that basing these services on a more outreached basis would enhance access for women in the ACT. It is also safe to assume that given the low numbers of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds accessing WIRC services (7%), this consultative group would respond favourably to the relocation of the shopfront functions to the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, given the central location of the Centre to a range of services for people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Two general consultation forums were also held on 18 and 25 October 2013 with representatives from the ACT Women's sector, including the Women's Centre for Health Matters, Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, Inanna, Women's Legal Centre and the Multicultural Women's Advocacy group. Minister Burch also met with the Ministerial Advisory Council for Women to discuss possibilities for a new service model.

WIRC staff have been provided with a range of consultation forums and these are ongoing in relation to employment and redeployment.

Ideas were sought at all consultations about ways to modernise and improve access to WIRC services.

Further consultation was held with WIRC staff about the range of services currently provided, their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the current model and how future service provision might occur. All WIRC staff were encouraged to continue contact at any time about other information they wished to have considered in the development of the new model.

Bilateral consultation occurred with a range of direct women's service providers in the ACT to invite suggestions about service delivery, which were considered in the development of the proposed model.

Bilateral consultation was also conducted with staff in Office for Women and CSD staff working on the Human Services Blueprint.

An information update and question session was provided to the December meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Council for Women.

Current WIRC service provision	Future provision	Approx % current WIRC output	% function maintained
Phone/email information service- 9 am to 5pm Mon to Frid	Continue from Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre	74%	100%
Development of WIRC calendar and organising groups/training	Calendar for Jan to June 2014 currently being developed and will be retained as a function	7%	100%
Facilitate operation of Domestic violence support groups and courses	Organised by WIRC until 30 June 2014 Outsourced to community provider from 1 July 2014	3%	100%
Facilitate operation of Financial/legal information sessions	Organised by WIRC until 30 June 2014 Incorporated into the domestic violence support groups and outsourced from 1 July 2014	1.5%	100%
Provision of 'Thinking Thursday' sessions	Will cease as of 31 December 2013. Attendees are primarily public servants– not CSD target group- referred to Chief Ministers and Treasury Directorate for consideration	.5%	0%
Drop in information and support service	Relocated to Theo Notaras centre and outreach at CFCs and Housing ACT Central Access Point	14%	100%
Domestic violence phone app	Investigate purchase/development support phone app like 'Aurora' in NSW	Nil	Additional
			Total WIRC services continued = 99.5%



M-13/2375

WIRC - ACTCOSS letter to Minister Burch

Date Created 12/12/2013 at 3:47 PM
Date Registered 12/12/2013 at 3:49 PM

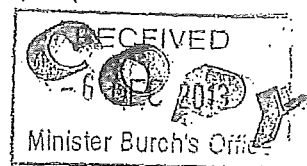
Record Type	Ministerial Matter	Last Action Date
Assignee	Electronic Only - IN TRIM since 12/12/2013 at 3:47 PM	
Owner Location	Organisational Governance	14/01/2014 at 9:59 AM
Home Location	Community Services Directorate	
Disposition	Active	
Security	Unclassified	
Notes	"Thursday, 12 December 2013 at 4:50:29 PM (GMT+11:00) Beer, Kylie:" received by DLO, forward to Directorate for urgent response (OfW). Minister would like the response by 18 December 2013. "Friday, 13 December 2013 at 11:22:25 AM (GMT+11:00) Martinez, Catherine:" Rec'd in Org Gov. Fwd'd to CPG for response. "Monday, 13 January 2014 at 1:18:26 PM (GMT+11:00) Corrigan, Amie:" Cleared by DDG. Forwarded to OrgGov rec'd and fwd to DLO "Monday, 13 January 2014 at 1:36:47 PM (GMT+11:00) Harris, Marilyn:" "Tuesday, 14 January 2014 at 9:25:44 AM (GMT+11:00) Beer, Kylie:" received by DLO, date changed to January 2014, copy of brief to CM attached and forwarded to CoS.	

Contained Records :-		Record Number	Record Title			
		M-13/2375-002	Letter			
		M-13/2375-001	request			
Action Name	Responsibility	Due	Start	Complete		
Allocate to Division	Community Participation Group	05/12/2013	04/12/2013	13/01/20		
Ack Letter sent, scan documents etc	Ministers Office	13/12/2013	12/12/2013	12/12/20		
Request for Approval - Director	Director, Participation Group	13/12/2013	12/12/2013	13/01/20		
Request for Approval - Executive Director	Executive Director of Policy and Orga	16/12/2013	13/12/2013	13/01/20		
Dispatch to Minister	DLO - Minister Barr and Minister Gall	18/12/2013	18/12/2013	13/01/20		
Quality Control - Ministerial Advisor	Ministers Office Advisors	19/12/2013	18/12/2013			
Signed FINAL to DLO for Scanning	Ministers Office	20/12/2013	19/12/2013			
Signed brief returned to division	Coordinator - (please assign to appro	23/12/2013	20/12/2013			
Signed Copy Processed within Division	Organisational Governance - Coordin	24/12/2013	23/12/2013			

To

- ☐ Minister
☐ Chief of Staff
☐ Senior Advisor
☐ Media Advisor

- ☒ DLO
☐ OM



Please

- ☒ Reply
☐ Advise
☐ Noted

- ☐ Arrange Meeting

- ☐ FYI

- ☐ Refer to

- ☐ File

- ☐ Action

- ☐ Comment

Joy Burch, MLA

Minister for Women

GPO Box 1020

Canberra ACT 2601

*amb CSR Agenda
Copy to EB.*

Dear Minister Burch

**WOMEN'S INFORMATION AND REFERRAL CENTRE (WIRC)
LOCATION AND ROLE**

As the peak body of the community sector, we are writing to you in response to the recent ACT Government decisions regarding the Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC). This letter represents the views of a number of organisations and individuals, including:

- Beryl Women Inc.
- Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
- Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- Innana Inc.
- Toora Women Inc.
- Women's Centre for Health Matters
- Women's Legal Centre
- YWCA of Canberra
- Rianne Williams (representing current providers of WIRC programs)

We see this as an opportunity to reorganise and reorient services to better support vulnerable and disadvantaged women in the ACT, and we would like to work collaboratively and constructively with the government to achieve this.

We believe there are three key issues to address.

The most urgent issue to address is the **location of WIRC** post 13 December 2013, and **securing a commitment to maintain existing funding levels** for women-specific services.

The second issue is a need to **develop a service model** for information, referral and response services that is appropriate and effective in meeting the needs of women in the ACT and

addressing the causes of over-representation of women in disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

The third matter to deal with is the development of an **overall vision and framework** for provision of women-specific and trauma-informed services that makes best use of funds, expertise and community linkages available in the ACT.

The advocacy ask below proposes a way forward on each of these issues:

1. The ACT needs a women's safe space located in the community that can be built into a women's centre that is a hub for women-specific, trauma-informed community development, information, and supported referral. This hub would operate using a service model that is strengths-based, community located and led/ outreach focused and both leverages existing expertise and expands expertise and capacity in the ACT.

2. The ACT Government needs to commit to:

- Provide advice to the community on what problems they have identified with the current operation and model of WIRC, and the evidence and data that underpins the identification of this problem.
- Current staff and financial resources for WIRC remaining available to use now and in the future to meet ongoing and growing needs of women, who are over-represented in many domains of disadvantage and vulnerability.
- An independent cost-benefit analysis, using available research and evidence, of the service model of WIRC.

3. There is a phased approach to implementation of changes in WIRC:

Phase one: Staff in WIRC are not moved to the North building in Civic, but instead to a community-based site where the staff can co-locate with another women's specific organisation.

Phase two: A collaborative approach is used to develop the service model for a women's centre via dialogue between Community Services Directorate (including the Office for Women) and relevant organisations, concerned individuals and citizens associations. The development process should be informed by current evidence regarding the current and emerging needs of

women, opportunities to interconnect with existing services, clarification of the gaps in existing provision and the evidence of good practice in addressing these gaps. The outcomes from this phase should be an overarching framework for current and future provision of women specific services in the ACT and a service model for a women's centre.

Phase three: Development of a plan and evaluation strategy for implementation of the agreed service model, and establishment of a joint community/government steering committee to oversee implementation and evaluation.

Phase four: Development of a plan for full implementation of the framework for women-specific services in the ACT

I would appreciate the time to come and talk with you about the way forward we have proposed and I will be in touch with your offices to coordinate a time to do this.

If you would like to contact my office please contact Lisa Wells, Office Manager on (02) 6202 7200.

Yours sincerely,



Susan Helyar
Director, ACT Council of Social Service Inc.

Email: susan.helyar@actcoss.org.au

29 November 2013



Joy Burch MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS
MINISTER FOR WOMEN
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Susan Helyar
Director
ACT Council of Social Service Inc.
Weston Community Hub
1/6 Gritten Street
WESTON ACT 2611

Dear Ms Helyar

Thank you for your letters of 29 November 2013 to myself and the Chief Minister, Ms Katy Gallagher, about the recent ACT Government decision regarding the Women's Information and Referral Centre (WiRC). The Chief Minister has asked me to respond on her behalf.

Thank you for your correspondence about the ACT Government's recent decision to remodel the services provided by the Women's Information and Referral Centre (WiRC). While I appreciate your concern around the changes we have made, our decision reflects the need to continue to provide services, including new services, to a rapidly growing community with quite different needs to those of 1978, when the WiRC was established.

The government's strong commitment to providing support and advice for women across the ACT remains unchanged and we will continue to explore ways to make these services more accessible for all. A particular focus has been to provide equal access to government services for women suffering isolation or disadvantage, and those from culturally diverse backgrounds, who live in outer suburbs.

The Child and Family Centres in Gungahlin, Tuggeranong and West Belconnen provide information, parenting, health and family support services in dispersed locations and in safe settings. In the city centre, the future service model for information and referral services will use elements of these centres and increase the use of existing community space in the centrally-located Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre.

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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CANBERRA

The new model for information and referral services in the ACT will provide better reach to those most in need and make more efficient use of public resources. Given the large proportion – around 74 per cent – of WIRC services which are provided by phone, email and post, none of these services will end. The phone number for information and referral services is continuing to operate (02 6205 1075).

I encourage you to read more detailed information about the objectives of the new model for information and referral services in the ACT in the government's recent position paper at www.communityservices.act.gov.au/women/womens_information/womens-information-and-referral-centre-wirc-position-paper.

Between February and September 2014, the ACT Government will be consulting with the women's service sector about the new model of service delivery and I encourage you to engage with that process.

I thank you for your interest in this area.

Yours sincerely

Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Women
December 2013



Date 20 November 2013

To Deputy Director-General *SC 28/11/13*
▪ Executive Director, OCYFS. *CW 25/11/13*

From Director, Early Intervention and Prevention Services

Trim No DBC-13/1035

Subject Women's Information Referral Centre and Child and Family Centres

Critical Date

STANDARD

Purpose

To provide you with information regarding a list of the programs and services that the Child and Family Centres (CFC's) can offer to women following the closure of the Women's information Referral Centre (WiRC).

Background/Issues

The Child and Family Centres are currently engaging with the Office for Women to consider how best to support the current change of arrangements at WiRC.

The three Child and Family Centres are staffed by professionals including social workers, psychologists, early childhood educators and maternal and child health nurses, and are designed to provide a range of support programs to assist parents and young children (pre-birth to 8 years).

Services that may be of interest to WiRC clients include:

- Relationships Australia have counsellors at each of the centres;
- Women's Health have a presence at each centre (counsellors and nurse);
- An intake service operates at each centre 8.30 – 5.00 and will see people who drop in as well as taking phone enquiries;
- There are a range of playgroups at each of the CFCs which largely target mothers – multicultural, children with a disability, parents with mental illness;
- From early 2014 we will be expanding our Parents as Teachers program, a home visitation program for vulnerable new mums; and

- The CFCs are well connected in their local areas to health, education and community services and supports.

A program map for the centres is provided at Attachment A. This will change marginally as programs are confirmed for 2014.

Discussions have occurred between the Director, Early Intervention and Prevention Services and the Director, Community Participation Group and it has been agreed that relevant space would be available at each of the Centres for relevant publications, brochures posters and that meetings, training sessions and existing programs and services may use the facilities of the Centres, however this will require booking facilities in advance.

Media Issues

The closure of the WiRC has attracted media attention.

Consultation

CFC Managers
Director, Community Participation Group
Manager, Office for Women

Financial Implication
Nil

Recommendation

That you:

- note the information in the brief.


Paul Wyles
Director
Early Intervention and Prevention Services

AGREED / NOT AGREED / NOTED

Sue Chapman
Deputy Director-General
November 2013



ACT
Government
Community Services

Ms Susan Helyar

Director

ACT Council of Social Services Inc

PO Box 849

MAWSON ACT 2607

Dear Ms Helyar

Thank you for your email of 29 November 2013 regarding the recent ACT Government decision to remodel the services provided by the Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC). I appreciate the intent of your 'advocacy ask' and some of the concerns you have expressed on behalf of a number of women's services in the ACT.

The ACT Government has a strong commitment to the provision of gender services in the ACT and will continue to explore opportunities for women to have easier access to these services at a range of locations across the ACT.

It is important to be clear that WIRC is and always has been a government information and referral service and the ACT Government is committed to continuing and improving its provision of an information and referral service for women in the ACT.

While I acknowledge that WIRC has over the past 35 years taken on some functions that sit outside a government information and referral service, it is important to clarify that WIRC is not a 'response' service, a 'trauma informed service' or a 'women's centre'.

The function and mission of WIRC has always been to provide assistance to women to access the range of government and community based services available to them, from childcare rebates to support groups. That 74% of the services provided by WIRC are undertaken via the phone, email or post suggests that, in the main, the community is aware that the primary function of the service is the provision of referral and information.

While I understand that WIRC has provided women focused space, the utilisation data for this function, with an average of 24 women a year 'dropping' in for support or information on domestic violence, does not support the continuing costs of maintaining a separate commercial lease in the city.

I can assure you however, that the work currently being undertaken to remodel a range of services and functions within the Community Services Directorate will ensure that an

appropriate space for women to access information and referral will continue to be provided.

~~It should be noted that since October 2013 consultations continue to be undertaken directly with appropriate community service providers which are encouraged to contribute their ideas, concerns and suggestions about the future of WIRC functions.~~

Thank you for your interest in the future provision of this important service for women.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Chapman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sue Chapman
Deputy Director General
Community Services Directorate

9 December 2013